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[THE PLOT.]

THE LOST CORONET.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"One Sparkle of Gold," "Evelyn's Plot," &c., &c.

CHAPTER III.

Oh, for a fate to crush the slave
Whose treason, like a deadly blight,
Comes o'er the brightness of the good
And blasts them in their hour of light.

RUTH LOVETT'S destination was to a far different home from the splendid mansion into which she had obtained a surreptitious entrance.

She wended her way along darkening squares from which the last lingering carriage rolled, and the lights disappeared from the lofty windows but now illumined with a blaze of brilliancy. Then she passed into humbler, narrower streets, where only a solitary night cab lingered, and here and there a glimmering lamp or fainter candle spoke of a watcher by a sick bed or for an absentee, whose tardy coming was even more heart chilling than intense physical suffering.

Even these modest tenements were too exalted for the strange visitor of Estelle De Vesel to claim one as a dwelling, and when at last she paused at a door which stood on the latch, and pushing it open, groped her way up the narrow staircase, it was plain that, whatever her power to influence the fortunes of others, Ruth's own lot was of the humblest description.

The room where she paused in her slow ascent was on the first floor, however—a grade more aristocratic than the "two pair front" or "back" of those miserable abodes—and when she opened it and entered there was a tolerably strong light from fire and candle illumining the room, and a still stronger odour of smoke and spirits pervading the apartment.

Lounging on the only chair that afforded the least prospect of rest or comfort—a second-hand and rather crazy specimen—reclined Mr. Nicholas Lovett, the hero of the night's adventure as spectator, waiter, perhaps spy, at the fair Countess of Mont Sorell's.

"So you have come at last. I was almost preparing to go to roost," observed the man, carelessly puffing

another cloud from his long "churchwarden," then imbibing a yet longer draught from the goblet before him.

"I could not get here before. I waited to see her," was the reply as the woman threw aside all her wrappings, and displayed more fully the fine though wasted figure and the well-moulded features that still bore traces of almost perfect beauty.

"Which do you mean, the 'countess' or the new girl?" he asked, roughly.

"I mean Estelle De Vesel, who will ere long be Countess of Mont Sorell," she returned, haughtily. "It would be well for you not to speak of her in that coarse style, Nicholas. I for one will not brook such vulgar disrespect."

"Then she never will be the fine lady she hopes, or you expect her to be," he replied, in the same brusque tone. "You forget, old girl, that it depends as much on me as on you."

"I do not allow it. I know and I can prove all that is necessary," returned Ruth, fiercely, "and I will, Nicholas, whatever be the cost. I determined on that long since."

"Just like all you women, ready to jump at what they take in their heads without thinking of consequences," he sneered, disdainfully. "But we shall see a trick worth two of that, Madam Ruth, unless you make it worth my while to support your schemes. So you saw this same nursing of yours, did you? Did you blab anything to her?"

"I said nothing that could commit us. She does not even guess my name, still less my abode, and least of all the manner of the transformation at which I hinted," said Ruth, with that strange superior tone and language which remarkably distinguished her from her companion, and even from her apparent station in life.

"Well, what did she say?—caught at it, I suppose, as a kitten would at a toy, or a tigress at a lamb, was it not so?" he inquired, with a hoarse laugh.

"She is proud, she well merits her station, she will grace a coronet," returned Ruth, loftily, "and she can value it as it deserves."

"Will she pay for it as it deserves, eh, Ruth? Did you touch upon that?" asked Nicholas, sharply.

"I told her that I should demand what is more, far more than gold," returned the woman, clasping her hands vehemently. "I told her she must give me obedience, respect, love, shelter, and she promised—promised, Nicholas; and for aught else it is but dross among her countless wealth. You need not fear."

"Nonsense, idiot that you are," returned the man, contemptuously. "I never yet found any one who had not enough and more than enough to do with what wealth he or she possessed, and found it hard to part with it. I tell you, woman, I will not trust to any vague promises or mawkish sentiment in this matter. I shall have my reward sure and liberal, or Estelle will never be a countess, unless she should catch some earl for a husband by her good looks."

"She has already won a heart from her milk-and-water cousin," said Ruth, exultingly. "Yes, even the rank and the wealth that fair-haired girl boasts are not enough to secure the love of the suitor whose hand is bound to her by solemn promise and betrothal. He loves Estelle. I saw it, heard it; so did you, Nicholas."

"More idiot he, that's all," returned the man, who had refilled his pipe and now gave a few preliminary and violent puffs. "It's like a raven and a dove, an angel and a demon, is the choice between those two. She's a strong spice of evil in her, has that same Estelle of yours, while the other is half an angel in works any way."

The woman scowled heavily. "You're practising your part, I suppose, already, Nicholas. You can do as you like with this same angel after a while. I'll wager she'll have her mettle pretty well tried before you've done with her. But, to leave all this jangling," she added, with a constrained smile, "and to come to business that is more pressing, how soon shall we strike the blow, Nicholas, and what are to be the preliminaries for the revelation?"

He mused thoughtfully for a few minutes.



"Harkye, Ruth," he said, "I tell you candidly I don't like the business much; that is, I would rather take five thousand from that fair girl to let matters stand than ten from the dark one to set them all topsy turvy."

"The promptings of natural affection, I suppose," sneered Ruth, bitterly, "though you never seemed to display much to your wife, I must say, Nicholas."

"I hadn't so much chance when I was away half the time," he replied, "and soured and cankered by want and hardship and her illness when I was with her. Still she had some hold on me, Ruth, and had she lived I should never have been the scoundrel I have since become. Poor Maria!"

There was a strange, wild remorse in the man's eyes as he spoke that Ruth scarcely thought favourable to her purpose, and she hastened to change the subject to one that she fancied would stir him more in the direction she desired.

"Harkye, Nicholas, I will pledge myself to get you any sum in reason that you can desire from Estelle if she be placed in her rights by your help."

"Do you suppose the other wouldn't do as much, and more, to keep hers?" he asked, sharply.

"No, she would not believe you, and you would but be chased as an impostor from her presence. Don't you know that possession is everything, Nicholas? You might ruin all, and spoil your market by even hinting danger to the countess regnant. Your whole past life would be raked up if you provoked her to call for more powerful assistance in her defence, and every statement be treated with absolute contempt."

"But she is of age, she is her own mistress. It was her father's will, so I was told, and at eighteen she can dispose of her wealth at will, while the other is helpless. What of that, Ruth?" he returned, bitterly. "It won't suit my book to wait two or three years for reward from the precious new countess."

A gust of passion swept over the woman's features.

"Nicholas, beware. If you dare to cast shame and insults on Estelle De Vesce I shall know how to avenge them. You say I depend on you to complete my proofs. I can and will dispense with them, though they might make the case more assured and positive. But there is one who will supply what I need if you fail me, one who knows much if not all."

She stepped forward and whispered in his ear for a few seconds, as if unwilling for the very walls to hear the words she poured into his brain.

"You would not, you dare not," he said, hoarsely. "They believe us dead—dead long since; it would be ruin to make it known."

"I care not. I will risk all to accomplish my purpose," she returned, vehemently, "yes, even to death itself, were it necessary, rather than see Estelle deprived of her rights."

"Pray what is it that binds you like a slave to that proud damsel's wheels?" he asked, sardonically. "They'll go over your neck if you don't mind, Ruth, like the great Indian car I used to see, murdering hundreds at a time of poor idiots like yourself."

"She is her father's child—his very image. It brings back my passionate, happy, feverish youth to look at her," she replied, evasively.

"And because that young lord used to look at you and call you a handsome lass, which you certainly were, then laughed at you for believing that he could waste a thought on a low-born cottager, you are good enough to take his daughter under your wing. That's not like you, Ruth," he added, suspiciously gazing at her. "I believe you loved that young fellow, with his false tongue and falser heart, who was the very blight of your life, and kept you from being the wife of an honest man."

Ruth Lovett's lips were compressed as if to shut in the tide of bitterness that might have otherwise found vent in words. But her eyes, her clenched hands, and her rigid attitude could not be so controlled as her strong will, and Nicholas himself was almost alarmed at the storm he had thus raised.

"Come, come, Ruth, old girl, I did not mean to upset you in this fashion. Let bygones be bygones; only you must see it's very unlike you to be so soft and forgiving to the child of the woman who stood in your shoes, as one may say; though, of course, you never could have expected anything else."

"You are right, Nicholas," said the woman, slowly and deliberately. "I am not one of such a soft, craven temper, and that should make you trust me a little better. But you see I've pretty well begun the punishment. The girl has been kept out of her rights for many a long year, and, as to the mother, why, I'll pledge my very life that she will be properly crushed down. Estelle despises her for her weakness and hates her for her fondness to her countess niece, and when she has the power to gratify her inclination depend on it I shall be amply avenged. I, Ruth Lovett, will hold the strings which shall govern and humiliate that Julia Wentworth who

was my hated, contemptible rival in Cland De Vesce's home if not his heart in long-past days."

She seemed rather talking to herself than her companion as she went on impetuously pouring out her bitter tirade, her deep, intense hatred that had been nursed and controlled for eighteen and more patient, silent years.

Nicholas looked at her with a curious mingling of cynical indifference and half-admiring, half-disgusted astonishment.

"You're a bit of a tigress, Ruth, old girl," he said, "and they always say that even a lion doesn't care to meet that interesting female in a rage. 'Pon my soul, I'm sorry for the girls—both of them—if you're to have the handling of them. It will be diamond cut diamond between you and the dark one I'll swear. But for the poor little Lily, why—"

"Oh, I'll leave her to your tender mercies, since you've turned so soft-hearted, Nicholas," she replied, contemptuously; "and I know you well enough to prophesy her fate. Your present chicken mood will soon pass away, and the old nature return. You'll never change—never, Nicholas—the evil leaven is too strong in your nature."

"Yes—thanks to you as well as others," he returned, fiercely. "If you had not interfered between me and her my life and nature would have been very different, Ruth. It is you who are to blame for my ruin as well as her death, and—"

"All the crimes and cruelties you have or may commit," she returned, scornfully. "Of course weak natures always cast the burden on others, whether of sin or sorrow; and you are mutable and weak, with all your fierceness, Nicholas. But it matters not; so long as you are content to work with me you shall reap the reward which you covet most—wealth, to gratify your low and sensual tastes, and one on whom to vent the violence and the caprice of your temper. I am made of very different stuff, and want different kind of recompense."

"Pray what is that?" he asked, bitterly, along more than he would confess by her taunts. "To share Estelle's coronet and her grandeur—that would suit your pride I well believe."

"To share her love, to be entitled to her respect, her sympathy, her honour," returned Ruth, vehemently. "Such things you cannot understand, but there are such cravings, such desires in some breasts, Nicholas."

"I don't understand you, I confess," he replied, doubtfully; "and I believe there's some mystery which I know not of at the bottom of all this. However, I'm willing to do my part if I am treated properly in the matter; but don't try any tricks, Madam Ruth, or your cunningly laid mine will all blow up like a torpedo under a ship's bottom, I can promise you. Now I'm going to bed, so good-night to you," he added, rising and stretching himself wearily.

"Good-day I suppose you mean," she replied, glancing at the window, through whose grimed panes the morning sun-rays were struggling. "Be content; you shall have your wish, and I mine."

The man departed as the last words escaped Ruth's lips; then she proceeded to draw out the chair-bed which served her for a couch, and to make her brief arrangements for retiring to its repose.

"Some hidden mystery," she repeated to herself, bitterly. "Yes, poor idiot, and what it is you will never know. Ruth Lovett has not kept a secret for nineteen years to let it out now. No, it will be buried with me in my grave, for it will never pass my lips unless—unless—But no, that can never be—I am sufficient to myself; and, besides, the only one who knows it crumbled to dust long since."

Ruth lay down, and ere long actually sank into a deep, heavy sleep.

It was strange that she should thus lose the feverish excitement of the past day in such profound oblivion; but slumber had been a stranger to her for more than forty-eight hours before that interview with Estelle De Vesce, and Nature asserted her right to refreshment of her exhausted powers, and it was noon ere Ruth Lovett woke from her dreamless repose.

CHAPTER IV.

Go, go—on peril's brink we meet;
No, never come again, though sweet;
Though Heaven—it may be death to me,
Farewell, and blessings on thy way.

"You look sadly tired, dear aunt," said Lady Mont Sorrell as the three ladies languidly discussed the late breakfast which succeeded that memorable ball. "You must lie down this afternoon, and we will send excuses to Mrs. Vivian for the evening, and enjoy a quiet rest at home."

"Certainly not. What, send an excuse for a dinner? Really, Pauline, you must be even more ignorant than we debutantes are supposed to be," interrupted Estelle, before her mother could reply. "It would be intolerable rudeness."

"It would be cruelty to drag Aunt Claud out in her

present fatigue," replied the young countess, calmly. "I daresay we shall not be missed in so large a party."

Estelle's brow darkened ominously, and Lady Claud hastened to avert the storm.

"Oh, I shall be quite well before night, my dear child. I have a headache, that is all. I daresay a little fresh air will be the best remedy; I will take a drive while you and Estelle ride this afternoon," she said, with a smile that seldom brightened her languid features save for the niece, who was more truly a daughter to her than her own wayward child.

"I will accompany you, aunt. I am almost too indolent for riding, and Estelle can do very well with my worthy old guardian's escort. We will take a charming, quiet drive in the country, where we shall not even see a creature to bow to," exclaimed Pauline, gaily. "It will be quite refreshing."

"And any one would call it quite affected for you to talk so when you are scarcely out, Pauline," said Estelle, contemptuously. "You take a princess's tone already, as if you wanted to throw off state cares in retirement."

"Perhaps I am tired already of this constant turmoil," said Pauline, with a momentary shade over her glad face, "but it is very ungrateful to complain. I fully confess, Estelle, when I am so loaded with blessings—and if it is a duty to go through all this whirl and make oneself generally agreeable it must be attempted at any rate. However, that won't affect our rural episode, will it, aunt? and I will give orders immediately. We will go off directly after luncheon—that is if we can take any after this disgracefully late breakfast."

She glanced gaily at the gold time-piece that pointed already to the mid-day hour.

The plans were soon arranged.

Estelle retired to her room to indulge her own restless cogitations as to the mystery of that stranger's predictions which had haunted her sleeping and waking dreams ever since the extraordinary visit of the woman who had attended to her night toilet.

Ere she had half exhausted her feverish speculations, and hopes and fears, the carriage that contained Pauline and her aunt rolled from the door.

Estelle gazed from the window, and the young countess, whose eyes had been accidentally raised at the moment, blew her a playful kiss as they drove off.

"She is very beautiful," murmured Estelle, gloomily. "Even I cannot deny it; though I hate her from my very heart. Yes, she might win any man's heart with that bright smile and child-like loveliness, while I, though I am beautiful too, have but a dark lustre compared to her fair brilliancy. And Quentin, does he really love me? or is it but his pride and jealousy that keep him in doubt and irritation, and drive him to me for comfort and flattery? Would he give her up for me, I wonder, were we equal in all else? Ay, if I were the countess, as that strange woman hinted, it might be so then. I believe that I should have more power than she has over his impetuous, proud, suspicious nature. But then could I trust him—I who love him with all the intensity of my woman's soul, which will demand an equal return? Perhaps Pauline is right after all. It would be but a doubtful homage he would yield if he were transferred from one countess to another like the estates and goods and chattels. Bah! the idea would be maddening, if it were not too absurd to dwell on it. The whole thing is simply impossible. She must have been mad, that dark, weird woman, and I am worse to believe one tittle of her tale. It is a good thing she neither stole my jewels nor tried to murder me, at any rate."

And the girl, with an impatient gesture, snatched up a French sensation novel that lay beside her, and soon absorbed her attention in its passionate, stirring pages.

Meanwhile, the two gentler beings who had left her were quietly drinking in sweet draughts of air and peace and rural beauty, such as is within reach even of the denizens of the "ugliest city in the world," more especially when, as in the present instance, high-bred horses and a light, perfectly hung carriage are at the command of the travellers.

"You are better now, auntie mine," said Pauline, coaxingly, as she watched the returning bloom and brightening eyes of the still-headache though faded Lady Claud.

"Yes, love," was the reply, "my headache has nearly gone, thanks to your gentle tending, dearest child. Ah, Pauline, what shall I do when you are taken from me? And I cannot hope you will remain much longer under my charge," she added, sadly. "Quentin will not wait for his prize."

"Oh, there is plenty of time to meet evils when they come, naughty aunt," laughed the young countess, "not that I ought to call it an evil when Quentin is in the case," she continued, blushing. "I am afraid he would be very indignant if he heard me talk so foolishly."

The remembrance of his strange irritability on the previous evening came coldly and ominously on her heart.

"Estelle would have equal claims to resent my seeming forgetfulness of her presence with me," replied Lady Claud. "But the truth is, Pauline, and to you alone would I confess it, little sympathy has ever existed between Estelle and me. She is so completely of her father's temper and nature, proud, talented, self-reliant, while I am not able to win her confidence or to cope with her strong will. It was so in my married life, and it is so now," continued the lady, with a sad, patient smile. "I was not meant to mingle with the haughty, brilliant De Vesce race."

"And am I of that category?" said Pauline, gaily, striving to divert her aunt's sad musings. "I am afraid I am a very degenerate scion to be the representative of such a line as you describe, auntie mine." Lady Claud gazed fondly at her.

"You are a sweet and unselfish one, at any rate, my Pauline, my adopted child," she returned. "And I believe there are more strength and fortitude under your gentleness than many might suspect. You would bear trial better than many more proud and imperious, I suspect; though Heaven grant you may not be tried, my sweet girl."

"It is in his hands! I will not either hope or fear too confidently," replied the girl, reverently. "And I trust it will give me strength when it sends sorrow. But what is Charles stopping for?" she said as the coachman suddenly arrested his horses.

"Please, my lady, I am afraid there is something wrong with the saddle!" said the man, touching his hat. "And with your ladyship's leave I'll send William to yonder public-house across the field, where he'll get a piece of cord or something to mend it. I can't understand how Rosmer managed to snap it, but he's uncommon fidgety and fresh this morning, my lady."

The countess assented without much concern.

There was no great hardship in remaining within the sight of that lovely prospect—which stretched out with rare beauty over wood and water and verdant spring green—for a brief space longer than might have been otherwise necessary.

The ladies reclined back on the ample cushions with a sense of languid pleasure and repose that was even more delicious than more active enjoyment in their present mood.

Neither spoke, and it might be that the thoughts of both were wandering far from even that lovely and soothing scene.

But the silence was abruptly disturbed, and a painful sort of incongruity jarred, as it were, on the feelings of both the fair soliloquists. A harsh, loud, roaring sound—rushing in the distance with the noise, if not the velocity, of a railway train—came sweeping on the road. And in a few brief seconds one of those "infernal machines" as they may be rightly termed, which are one of the applications of steam to agriculture at the expense of nerves and safety, rushed by the waiting carriage.

If Rosmer had been fidgety previously this terrible apparition completed the derangement of his composure, and ere the "steam plough" was well past he had begun a furious plunging and kicking, which terminated in a most desperate and determined start that was dangerously infectious to his companion.

Ere Charles was aware the mischief was done. The two "thoroughbreds" of which he was so proud took the law and the reins in their own hands, or rather their own teeth. And the carriage and its inmates were rushing along at the pace if not the safety of a railway train.

"Aunt, dearest aunt, be calm. It is our only hope," urged the pale girl, with just sufficient strength and self-possession left to restrain her companion from the dangerous leap from the vehicle which had been the first instinct of the Lady Claud De Vesce.

But Pauline was heavier, or more far-seeing; she knew that at the terrific pace which the animals maintained any such attempt was certain death; and although hope seemed fruitless, and the sole termination of that terrible race must be fatal, she resolved that at least the consummation should not be hastened or caused by her own rash imprudence.

White as a sheet, but with calm and compressed lips, and a heart that was raised in earnest and devout prayer to the power which alone could send help in their terrible need, Pauline clasped her aunt in her arms, and held her tightly till she almost became unconscious from the terror and the constraint in which she was held.

On rushed the terrified and infuriated animals, and still the coachman bravely maintained his almost desperate duty, and pulled the reins which had lost power to control the high-bred creatures in their course. And still Pauline bravely preserved her seat and her self-control over her own and her aunt's movements. Not a cry—not a sound escaped her that might

have tended to add to the horses' terror without aid to herself. Her face was blanched to the hue of her own fairy lace bonnet, and her hands were well nigh benumbed in their strong, fixed grasp of her aunt's almost unconscious form.

The end seemed terribly near.

There was a high gate at the end of the short by-road down which the horses had taken their wilful course, and if they could not be turned before it was reached the carriages would infallibly be dashed against it, and all but certain death be the consequence.

Pauline closed her eyes as they went on. Her heart was lifted up in fervent prayer. She asked for help to live, help to die, and, clasping her aunt yet closer to her, she prepared to meet the fate which she could scarcely believe could be averted.

There was a sudden cry, but not from her—a stern, strong voice—an abrupt jerk that threw her back on the seat, and made her fancy for a moment that the carriage was overturned. Then the vehicle stopped.

Pauline opened her eyes fearfully. The box was empty; but by the trembling, panting horses stood a flushed, struggling, but young and evidently athletic man, while the prostrate coachman was slowly endeavouring to rise from his rude descent to the ground.

Had the stranger been one of the famed horse-whisperers he could scarcely have appeared to exert a more charmed influence over the excited animals as he exerted his whole strength to restrain their nervous, plunging struggles, while yet speaking soothing and encouraging words, till their alarm gradually subsided, and their own familiar driver came to his assistance.

Pauline could not at first do aught but remain in motionless, bewildered thankfulness. A faintness crept over her that she strove in vain to resist. She closed her eyes again with a delicious sense of security that almost made the torpor a relief.

But a faint cry from Lady Claud roused her from this indulgence, and she hastily passed her hands over her eyes, and returned to the sense of what was incumbent on her of exertion and gratitude.

"My dear, dear aunt, calm yourself. We are safe—quite safe—thanks to this gentleman's bravery," she added, turning to their preserver, who was now at leisure to attend to the fair ladies he had rescued so heroically.

"I hope you are not hurt, and that you have not been painfully alarmed, Lady Mont Sorell," he said, lifting his hat with his left hand, and bowing with a manly deference that spoke neither obsequiousness nor an undue familiarity.

Pauline did not, at the moment, notice either the peculiarity of the stranger knowing her name or the use of his left hand in lifting the covering from his brow. She only observed that his features had a remarkable expression of kindness and earnest thoughtfulness, though perhaps not boasting any great perfection in their contour. She only felt that his voice was warlike and refined in tone, such as denotes gentle breeding, if not birth, in the speaker.

"How can we thank you?" said the girl, extending her hand eagerly to their deliverer; "we owe you our lives, and we can never forget the debt."

This time the use of the young man's left hand in accepting the fair fingers of the young countess was more remarkable than before.

And Pauline, hastily glancing at the other arm of their preserver, saw that it hung powerless by his side. "Merciful heaven! Your arm is broken," she exclaimed, sadly, "and in our rescue!"

"No, I think not. Only sprained, I fancy, by those fiery animals of yours, Lady Mont Sorell. I should scarcely advise you to trust yourself to them again," replied the stranger, trying to smile, though he could not altogether subdue the expression of pain on his features.

By this time Lady Claud's terror was beginning to subside, and almost at the same moment the absent footman came in sight, running with eager terror in his blank looks towards the carriage, which he had evidently expected to find lying in fragments, and, as he afterwards expressed it, with "arms and legs in every direction, to say nothing of the heads being smashed by those confounded brutes. It was nothing but a miracle that saved them and my lady from being smashed to smithereens."

"I may venture to leave you now, Lady Mont Sorell," said the stranger; "you are in safety. I will go and get my unlucky limb put into its natural proportions again."

"No, no, indeed you must not," said Pauline, eagerly. "You must allow us to conduct you to your destination, and know to whom we are so deeply indebted. Aunt Claud, am I not right?"

"Oh, yes, indeed—indeed you must not leave us," said the lady, hurriedly. "It would indeed be barbarous ingratitude on our part, and, besides, I really could not feel safe without you."

Pauline gave one of her gay smiles as she saw the stranger about to yield obedience to a not very un-welcome command.

"I am afraid I am rather selfish, as well as my aunt," she laughed. "I shall be very thankful to have you with us, Mr. —"

"My name is Stanley Brereton," said the young man as he took his place opposite the two ladies, "an humble student at the bar, only just called, and not yet able to boast a share in its honours."

"I should have thought you were better fitted for the army from your heroic bravery, Mr. Brereton," said Lady Claud, graciously.

"I am afraid I cannot boast of more than any peasant who happened to have seen the accident would have displayed," said the stranger, smiling, "and especially when it was in such a cause."

His eyes wandered involuntarily, yet not imperceptibly, to Pauline's lovely face.

"Only that you could not have known who we were when you rushed to the rescue," observed Pauline. "Though," she added, thoughtfully, "you did seem to recognize me when you first came up to us."

A flush coloured Stanley Brereton's cheeks at the innocent remark. Perhaps he could scarcely have explained why he should hesitate to confess the truth—why he should not have frankly said that for many an evening during that last bright May month he had haunted the park, in the hope of catching a glimpse of the fairest among the fair group of equestrians, and gone home to reproduce her image in his heart and on the canvas with which he amused himself in his leisure hours.

"I have a smattering of heraldry, and could recognize the arms on your carriage," he said, earnestly. "Besides, there are many more to recognize a bright star than the luminary can ever know or dream of, and you must not be surprised if you should find yourself in some sense a public character, Lady Mont Sorell."

"Still I am sure you would have done the same for the veriest and humblest stranger," said the girl, warmly. "Do not be unjust to yourself, Mr. Brereton."

It was dangerously sweet to hear sweet words in a sweeter voice from such lips, and Stanley would have willingly suffered double his present severe pain to hear and look and drink in balm—which, alas, might turn to rankling poison—for his injuries.

"Are you in much pain?" resumed the girl, softly.

"Let me try and make some support for your arm, Mr. Brereton."

Taking from her neck a white silk scarf that had been added by her maid's care for the possible chill of a long country drive, Pauline knotted it into a kind of sling, and gently placed it under the wounded arm, with a dextrous skill and tenderness that saved the patient from all but the most inevitable pain in the process.

Pain! It was rather the most exquisite pleasure that the young man could have ever experienced.

To feel those soft fairy fingers just touching his hands and coming in contact once or twice with his very cheeks as she arranged the bandage, to have that lovely face bent down so near to his, and to see her anxious looks, were simple intoxication to the reserved but intense nature of the young barrister.

"Is that more comfortable?" she asked when her task was done.

"It is perfect," trembled on his lips, but he changed it to "Perfectly so, I thank you, Lady Mont Sorell."

"Whither shall we take you, Mr. Brereton?" asked Lady Claud as they approached the metropolis, "or will you do us the great pleasure of coming with us and permitting us to send for our surgeon, in whom we have great confidence, and he can assure us better of your safety? If you are bachelor rooms you may perhaps be better taken care of with us than at your own apartments."

"Do come," said Pauline, with innocent warmth, her heart too entirely engrossed with Quentin Oliphant even to imagine the possibility of any one misinterpreting look or word of hers. "It will save us much anxiety to know the surgeon's report."

Stanley hesitated ere he could bring himself to reply. He knew but too well what was his duty, his safety, yet the temptation was a terribly overpowering one, and it cost him a far greater mental struggle than the fiery horses had required from his bodily strength ere he could conquer the rebellion in his heart.

But he was inured to self conquest, and with an icy manner that covered a volcano beneath he at length commanded his voice to reply.

"You are very kind, very considerate, Lady Mont Sorell, but it is most superfluous anxiety for a mere trifle. I shall get the injury remedied in half an hour, and forget it in a few days."

"But we shall not," persisted the girl, with a

grieved, mortified look that struck a dagger into Stanley's inmost heart. "We can never forget your heroic service, Mr. Brereton. I am afraid you scarcely forgive us for the pain and trouble we have caused you."

"No; for there is nothing to forgive," he said, with unconscious sadness in his tone, though he tried to laugh off the bitter emotions every gentle look and word of that beautiful girl stirred up. It was but a welcome excitement in a dull, dreary life.

The carriage now rattled along the stones of the quiet square, and Stanley sprang out, as it stopped before that spacious mansion, ere the half-dozen liveried domestics who hung about the hall had time to offer their services or recover their surprise at the disordered aspect of the whole equipage.

"I shall, at least, have the honour of inquiring for your and your aunt's health, and returning this borrowed property," he said, in a voice from which he vainly strove to banish every emotion, while he touched with his still-injured hand the scarf which Pauline had used for the fractured limb.

"Certainly," she said, gaily, "and remember I prize that scarf too much to risk its transmission through other hands, Mr. Brereton. I must stipulate for your delivering it to me in person."

Stanley could no longer resist or hesitate. "Your commands shall be obeyed, Lady Mont Sorell," he said, pressing the hand she had extended with an unconsciously convulsive grasp. "If I were to venture on a request in my turn I would urge you to take repose for the rest of the day. I fear you will suffer for the self control you exerted when the excitement has gone."

Lifting his hat, with a profound bow to Lady Claud, he hurried away.

"It is but my own suffering," he muttered, "there is no risk to her, and I may as well drain the draught to the dregs in its poisoned sweetness; it cannot work more fatally than the mad fever which already burns in my veins."

Stanley, with a return to the more practical necessity of the moment, hailed a cab near him, and ordered the man to drive him to the nearest surgeon whose name he could recall as a man of any note for the operation which his fast-increasing suffering made imperatively urgent.

Pauline slowly ascended the staircase to the drawing-room, from whose open door the sound of voices proclaimed her cousin Estelle's presence and that of some companion in the apartment. Perhaps Stanley was right, and she had begun to feel the reaction from the alarm and severe tension she had undergone, for her movements were languid, and her sweet face thoughtful and pale, as she passed up the richly carpeted steps and entered the saloon.

Estelle was standing, still dressed in her riding-habit, which was perhaps her most becoming costume; her plumed hat was in her hand, and in its removal some of the coils of raven hair had escaped, and waved in picturesque disorder on her graceful throat and shoulders.

Lord Quentin was sitting in the deep recess of the bay window, half sheltered by the heavy curtains, but there was a look of annoyance on his face which Pauline's quick eye at once painfully detected.

"Well, Pauline, you truant! Why, you left me here, and find me here again at my post," exclaimed Estelle, holding up her finger reprovingly; "yet I had a delightful ride, and persuaded poor Lord Quentin to return with me, in full certainty of finding you at home long since."

"Lady Mont Sorell has been more amusingly engaged, to judge from the impressive farewell between her and that extraordinary person who has been her escort," broke in Quentin before Pauline had time to speak. "Miss De Vesce seems to have been too flattering in her kind assurance of welcome."

"Oh, Quentin, how can you be so unjust?" exclaimed Pauline, scarcely able to command the tears which sprang to her eyes. "It was owing to that gentleman that we have returned at all. We narrowly escaped a terrible accident from the horses taking fright, and he risked his life to save us."

"Or appeared to do so," said Quentin, sullenly. "Perhaps you, in your inexperience, exaggerated the danger, Pauline."

"Indeed, indeed, I did not," returned the girl, earnestly. "His arm is, I fear, broken in his desperate efforts to stop the horses, and Charles was thrown from the box, and is, I expect, much bruised. Dearest Quentin, how can you pervert all I say and do so sadly?" she added as Estelle, with some murmured excuse about "going to see about poor mamma," disappeared.

"Have I not reason, Pauline? Last night I had abundant cause to complain of your indifference to my feelings in the intoxication of your triumph, and now to-day, when I expected to see you in the park, and afterwards come hither at your cousin's kind and

soothing representation, to ask from you some explanation—some assurance—I find you gone off on an endless, purposeless drive, and returning at last on most affectionate terms with some insolent plebeian, who has made the most of catching the horses' bridles. Are you surprised that I disapprove of such inconsiderate disregard of my feelings and your own position, Pauline?"

Poor girl! She listened with a confused, terrible impression that there must be some foundation for her lover's complaints, and a still more womanly hope that they were but proofs of his extreme and exacting devotion to herself; and, in spite of the generous instinct that blamed the injustice to her brave preserver, there was more satisfaction than resentment in her trembling voice as she replied:

"It is with this as so many other apparent slights, dear Quentin, a perfectly innocent and unavoidable proceeding on my part. Did not Estelle tell you that I accompanied my aunt in consequence of her feeling to need fresh air and quiet? I had no idea that you had any special reason for wishing to see me, or I would have sent you a particular message to explain my absence."

"Ah, you judged me by yourself, I suppose, Pauline," he replied, bitterly. "I, at any rate, have been foolish enough to suppose my presence was always desired by you, and it was a matter of duty to endure it when decorum demands."

"Quentin!"

She could say no more. Her shaken nerves could not sustain this harassing injustice and upbraiding, and she sank into a chair near her, and burst into a passion of ungovernable weeping, while her fair head bowed in utter abandonment and humility on her small hands. It was impossible to resist such an appeal, even in Quentin's morbid and distorted frame of mind.

In a moment he was kneeling at her side, her hands clasped in his, and his lips kissing away her tears.

"Pardon, my dearest! I was harsh, and your own nerves were so agitated. Another time we shall understand each other better; but I am so jealous and proud, when you have so much to give, and I cannot endure to seem a poor, mean-spirited slave. You will forgive me, darling, and never give me cause to complain more, especially when such unworthy rivals are in question?"

Sweet, loving, gentle Pauline needed no other pleading to give her joyful pardon.

(To be continued.)

SCIENCE.

NEW USE FOR PARAFFIN.—Dr. Vohl announces that mixed with benzole or Canada balsam, paraffin affords a glazing for frescoes much superior to soluble glass. By covering the interior of wine casks with a film of pure white paraffin, poured in melted, he has effectually prevented the spoiling of the wine and its evaporation through the wood.

FIXING CHALK DRAWINGS.—Mount the paper on drawing-board in the usual way, then lightly brush over it a weak solution of gelatine in water; the paper is then ready for drawing on. When finished, thoroughly expose it to the steam from the mouth of a boiling tea-kettle. If this be carefully done the chalk drawing is fixed by the gelatine, acted on by the after process of steaming.

A REALLY GOOD CEMENT.—The following has been proved for cementing wood, iron, leather, glass, paper, and almost all kinds of household materials: Best isinglass half an ounce, rub it between the hands until it breaks down into a powder, put in a bottle, and put as much common acetic acid to it as will just wet the mass through, stand the bottle in some boiling water, and the paste will dissolve and be fit for use at once; it will go solid when cold, but is easily warmed up the same as before. Leave the cork out when warming or there will be a blow up.

FLORENTINE BRONZE.—First dip the articles (which must be brass, of course), then immerse them in a pickle (composed of about one part by measure of aquafortis, and two of water, with scraps of clean iron, which will give them a bright copper colour, if care be taken that the pickle is well saturated with copper, and that the iron is clear and in pieces, neither too large or too small. Tin plate parings answer best. When you have got them of a bright copper colour, which is not difficult, rinse them through clean cold water, then through water rather too hot to put your hand in, and dry in cold dry sawdust. This plan will be found more convenient than using hot sawdust, which tarnishes the articles more readily. Then make a paint, by mixing together equal parts of Spanish brown and blacklead, adding 1oz. of black sulphide of antimony to every four pounds of this mixture, grind the powder well before adding water enough to make a thick paste. Paint the articles with this, dry them, and brush them with a lathe scratch brush. A

scratch brush is easily made by tying half a dozen bundles or more of No. 29 brass wire to a wooden chuck, horizontally, with copper wire. Nothing now remains except lacquering with gold lacquer, or a lacquer composed of spirits of wine one gallon, orange shellac 8oz. It may now be hatched or relieved, as it is called, by scraping and burnishing. A simpler way of doing it is to copper it as before, but, instead of painting and scratching, it is darkened by brushing it with a blacklead brush, using blacklead to make it darker, and Spanish brown to make it light. This is convenient where the operator has no lathe, but it is neither so quick nor bright. A cheaper plan, used by some manufacturers, is to immerse the article in a solution, the proportions of which are:—Spirits of salt about half a gallon, iron scale 2lb. or 1½lb.; arsenic, ½lb. or ¾lb.; drying and scratching without colour, and lacquering the yellowish black-ground thus formed with a deep-red lacquer, obtained with red sanders-wood.

WHOM THE GODS HELP.

THAT brave self-help is ever sure
All needed favour to secure
Of gods and men, is often told
In moral fables quaint and old;
Which teach, besides, that tears and prayers
Are worthless to the man who spares
To work—like him who, at his ease,
Sat down and called on Hercules
To help him start the load of hay
Which, fastened in the miry way,
Moved not a single inch the more
For all the oaths the carter swore,
Although he cursed, with noisy wrath,
The load, the horses and the path,
The cart, the maker and himself;
Until, at last, the weary elf,
Since all his oaths were doomed to fail,
Bethought him praying might avail;
And so to Heaven he lifts his eyes
And thus to Hercules he cries:
"Oh, mighty god!" the carter prayed,
"Most humbly I beseech thine aid;
For here—was e'er such hapless luck?—
Fast in the mud my cart is stuck,
And, howe'er I whip and shout,
My horses fail to draw it out!"
And now a voice the carter hears
Which from the sky salutes his ears,
With words of counsel, such as these:
"Wouldst have the help of Hercules?
Then help yourself a little first;
Your case is surely not the worst;
Remove that stone that blocks the way;
Fill up the rut as best you may.
There!—that will do. Now take your whip
And touch the leader on the hip;
Now put your shoulder to the wheel,
And now to Hercules appeal!"
So said, so done! "The horses start
The load with ease—out comes the cart!
But, ere the voice had died away,
It spake once more: "'Tis well to pray;
But praying ever best succeeds
When seconded by manly deeds!"

J. G. S.

ORIGIN OF AMBER.—Professor Zaddach shows that the trees which yielded the amber must have grown upon the greensand beds of the Cretaceous period, flourishing luxuriantly on the marshy coast which then surrounded the great continent of Northern Europe. Probably the temperature was then much higher than it is now; and this even at that epoch extended to the now frost-bound Arctic regions, a fact which has been proved by the remarkable plant-remains of temperate climes which have been recently discovered there. The amber flora of the Baltic area under review contains northern forms associated with plants of more temperate zones; and thus camphor trees (*Cinnamomum*) occur with willows, birches, beech, and numerous oaks. A species of *Thuja*, very similar to the American *Thuja occidentalis*, is the most abundant tree amongst the conifers; next in abundance Widdingtonia, a great variety of pines and firs, including the amber pine; thousands of these, it is supposed by the professor, might have perished; and, while the wood decayed, the resin with which the stem and branches were loaded might have been accumulated in large quantities, in bogs and lakes, in the soil of the forest. If the coast at that time was gradually sinking, the sea would cover the land, and in due course carry away the amber and masses of vegetable detritus into the ocean, where it was deposited amidst the marine animals which inhabit it. But in higher districts the amber pines would still flourish, and so amber still continues to be washed into the sea, and deposited in the later formed greensand, and still later overlying formation of the "brown coal."



[“ALL EQUAL HERE.”]

ADA ARGYLE.

CHAPTER IV.

Death calls ye to the crowd of common men.

James Shirley.

EVENTS had passed rapidly, and only a few minutes—though each of them seemed very long—had elapsed from the time of the crash which had awakened every soul on the boat to the time when Rashleigh stood upon the flooded deck, holding the unconscious Ada with one arm and sustaining himself by clinging to an iron pillar with the other.

Argyle had left them when the tumult was at its height—when some were rushing for the boats, and others, conscious that no crowded boat could live in such a sea, were frantically wrenching off doors and knocking boxes of freight to pieces, with some vague idea of making a raft which could sustain them on the raging billows.

While Rashleigh stood thus vainly trying to make Ada comprehend and reply to his words some strange fragments of speech reached his ears from the Babel-like jargon which resounded on every side of him.

Some were on their knees loudly praying; some were embracing and bidding each other adieu, yet exhorting to courage and expressing faith in their speedy reunion in a land of bliss; and some little children, closely hugged in parental arms, were crying and begging to be taken “home!”

Close at Frederick’s side, and near some piled boxes of freight, stood a stalwart man, who, from such glimpses as he could obtain of him in the gloom, faintly lighted by swinging lamps, he judged might have been a common labourer, or perhaps a son of Vulcan, for he was swart and grimed, and his large, muscular arms looked as if they could swing the ponderous sledge as easily as delicate maidens wield the croquet-mallet and drive the painted balls.

As he stood with his arms folded on his great chest, looking off upon the wild water, speaking to no one, uttering no sound, a little well-dressed but weazen-faced old man approached him, doubtless attracted by his look of strength, and said, hurriedly, and with shrill and piping voice:

“I will give you ten thousand pounds if you will save my life. My name is Rolfe, and I am a banker and am able to do it.”

“I have heard of you, Mr. Rolfe,” replied the other; “they say you are very rich, but I’m thinking we’re all about equal here in point of wealth. There ain’t one of us but what would give all he has in the world for a square yard of good ground to stand upon.”

A shriek from many voices went up at this moment as the vessel, sinking in a “trough” of unusual depth, seemed as if she never would rise to surmount the next sea, which swept across the deck, knocking some of the passengers down, and carrying them nearly across the whole width of the boat.

Some indeed were said to have been washed overboard, but whether this was so or not none seemed to know, for all were too intent on self-preservation to take heed for those already lost.

Rolfe caught at his sturdy neighbour’s arm as the wave swept past him, and said:

“You—you are strong; you can do something. I will make you rich; by Heaven I will—twenty—twenty thousand. I am worth ten times that sum.”

“He!” replied the other, in a jeering voice. “You are no richer than I am, none, man. Where is your gold and silver now? Where is your bank stock? Draw your cheque now and see if these waves will regard it? Perhaps you can buy them off.”

“Do not mock me,” said the old man, in a more piteous tone; “I do not claim to be any better than you because of my money—”

“You needn’t! You needn’t. We are all equal here,” repeated Vulcan, almost angrily. “If the waves have not already taught you that, here comes one which I think will complete the lesson.”

Again they settled deeply in the terrible trough—again the labouring vessel shook and shuddered as if instinct with life, and struggling to preserve it, and again wild cries went up from a hundred throats as the vengeful waters dashed across the boat seemingly in search of their expected prey.

Rolfe dropped upon his knees and clasped those of the giant as he saw the surge coming, and when it had passed he again rose, wet and dripping, and still clinging to the strong man, who, though harsh in language, did not seem disposed to refuse him the poor boon of his passive support.

“All equal here,” repeated the latter, as if gloating upon the idea that he, a life-long victim of poverty, was not inferior to the affluent banker at his side. “All equal!”

There was bitterness in his tone, and it indicated a morose spirit, unsuited to the awful scene around them. But those who, like Rashleigh, heard the end of the hurried conversation had reason to judge him more leniently.

“No, we are not equal!” said Rolfe, feebly. “You have strength which I have not. I have not even a life-preserver, and gold cannot buy one.”

“I believe you. But how is it you have none? Were there none in your berth?”

“Yes, but I forgot them at first, and when I went back for them they were gone. There is not half

enough. The owners of the line ought to be indicted for murder. They are guilty before Heaven of my murder—and fifty others. I have seen fifty without them. I will give ten thousand pounds for yours—you are strong and can swim miles without one. Come!”

“Mr. Rolfe,” said the other, impressively, “do you see that cabin door?”

“Yes, yes—oh, yes!”

“Just inside there, out of the wind and wet, tied in a chair which will be a raft for him, sits a little crippled boy not eight years old, whom you won’t not look at a second time if you should meet him in the street.”

“Well?”

“He is mine—mine! I am bringing him from an hospital where they have vainly tried to cure him. I am taking him home to his mother. There is not a year’s life in him, so the doctors say, but all your wealth counted down here in gold would not buy from me the little chance which there is of saving him. Are you answered?”

“Yes, yes! You are right. I honour you, I thank Heaven for the humanity which you manifest. Nothing should tempt me to accept your services at his expense. I did not know it. You should have told me this before.”

This conversation was rapidly uttered, and was heard only by a few, for all were preoccupied with their own distress, and no signs of hope appeared.

The billows did not all dash over the boat—they were not all equally large, and there were some who counted them with dreadful forebodings, saying that every ninth or tenth wave was the greatest, and that it was one of these which would finally submerge them.

We have said that the conversation between the banker and the working man was heard by few, but when it had ended so strikingly the former, turning away, repeated in louder tones the offer which the father of the invalid child had so properly refused.

“Ten thousand pounds for a life-preserver! Fifteen thousand! Will nobody sell? Twenty thousand pounds!”

“What good would it do us, mister, after we are drowned?” said a man, who, with several others, was holding by the next post to Rashleigh’s, his waist encircled by one of the coveted treasures. “What good would it do us, even supposing you should live to pay it, and shouldn’t change your mind?”

“You may be saved without it. The boat may not sink after all—”

“Oh, Heaven! here we go!” exclaimed a loud voice as the vessel, with a sounding concussion, descended into another of the deepest hollows, and

another gigantic sea came pouring over the gun-wales. But she rose again, and laboured on, her timbers groaning and creaking as if they were being wrenched apart by the terrible strain upon them.

"She may not sink," resumed the banker, earnestly; "or if she do you may be saved, or at the worst the money shall be paid to your wife and children. Will you do it?"

"No—no—I have no wife or children, and I won't sell my life."

"What is the security?" asked a pale, placid-looking man, lurching up to the banker, and catching at the slim pillar by which half a dozen others were supporting themselves. "Who knows that this gentleman is able to make his offer good?"

"I know it," said the father of the crippled boy. "And I have no doubt he will keep his word if he lives."

"But if he perishes after all—who will make it good for him?"

"My wife and children," replied the banker, eagerly. "Here are witnesses, some of whom will doubtless survive. Or I will give you an order upon them, or a cheque on my bank, if I can write it."

"I can write it," replied the other, coolly, "though it must be in pencil of course. Will that be good?"

"Yes—the courts have decided that. Yes—yes—he quick!" exclaimed Rolfe, speaking like a man who believes he has made a great bargain, and fears that the other party will recede from it. Yet there were other reasons for haste.

The new bargainer, whose name was Shelburn, moved nearer to one of the swinging lamps, and having found a letter in one of his pockets, tore from it a blank half-sheet, and then with a pencil attempted the difficult task of writing a cheque on Mr. Rolfe's bank, the name of which the letter gave him.

The banker eagerly signed it, and Shelburn, having carefully examined the signature, folded the paper carefully and deposited it in a very thin flat wallet which seemed to contain nothing else, and placed it in his breast-pocket.

After this he deliberately took off his life-preserver and himself fastened it around the waist of its new owner, nor was there seemingly a spectator of the scene who did not think that the purchaser had by far the best of the bargain.

Many looked curiously at Shelburn, who, though very pale, maintained his placid expression mingled with a look of much firmness and resolution. He was a man about thirty-five years old, respectably apparelled and of gentlemanly deportment.

"It's a shame," said one of the passengers, angrily—he was a burly, coarse, black-browed man—"to go for to tempt a poor man to throw away his life like that. That's my idea, and them that don't like it may lump it."

"It's a fair bargain, my friend," said the banker. "Mr. Shelburn is young and strong, and his chance of escape without a preserver is far better than mine. Besides, the boat may not sink."

"It's sinking now," rejoined the other, "every minute. I heard a fireman say just now that there's four feet of water in the hold, and we are out of sight of any land."

"She may hold out till daylight; there may be other boats in sight then. And if he should escape he will be rich—rich."

"Never mind about arguing the question now," interposed Shelburn, "it's a fair bargain, as Mr. Rolfe says, and I am no more disposed to back out of it than he is. I know well what I am doing, and I do not take this great risk out of avarice or greed. I only wish—"

"What do you wish?" asked Rolfe as the speaker hesitated.

"If I should be lost this paper will be lost with me," resumed the other. "I only wish I could be certain that my poor wife and children would get the money."

"How can I convince you?"

"Excuse me, my good sir, but if—if you would—swear to it!"

"I will! I do! Here and now—before high Heaven!" answered the banker, holding up one trembling hand. "Are you satisfied?"

"I am, thank you; I am! If you live I believe you will keep that oath, and if—if we are both drowned there may be some here who will survive us, and will try to see the bargain ratified. You know my name, and my family can easily be found."

The speaker looked around him as he said this, and several upon whom his eyes fell—Rashleigh among others—responded to his appeal, and promised to bear faithful witness to the agreement.

The scene which it has required so many words to depict really occupied but a few minutes, and Argyle had not yet returned to his friends, nor had Ada recovered from her swoon, nor had aught of the

force of the tempest or the panic of the passengers abated when it ended.

CHAPTER V.

To bear is to conquer our fate. Campbell.

It was fortunate for Ada that she remained so long unconscious, but she revived at last, and seemed for a few moments so much disconcerted at finding herself so tenderly supported by Mr. Rashleigh that she scarcely had a thought, at first, for the danger which had before so greatly appalled her.

Quickly disengaging herself from his encircling arm, she yet necessarily clung to it with her own, and, looking wildly about her, inquired what had happened, and where her father was.

While her protector explained, and begged her to be composed—for the confusion around them was enough to terrify a far stouter heart—Mr. Argyle reappeared, forcing his way through the dividing crowd, and dragging after him a wooden settee, which he had procured, he said, from below.

"It may be of use," he said, coolly, "if affairs should get serious; but at any rate it will be of service to us here, as we can now sit down and keep our feet out of the water. How is Ada? Has she got over her fright? But it would be strange if she had in this panic-stricken mob. I never saw such a set of big babies in my life. You can no more reason with them than you can with the waves."

"Have you been trying?" asked Fred.

"Yes, yes; and so have several of the officers, but they can't get a hearing. They are sure the boat is about to sink, and will hear nothing to the contrary."

"Oh, father!" exclaimed Ada, reassured by his words and manner, "do you think there is any hope for us?"

"There it is again! That's like the rest of them! Any hope? Why, you might better ask if there is any danger. I'd go back to my berth and go to bed again if I could get there through the crowd."

Was this fearlessness all real or was it partly affected to encourage Ada?

No reasoning man could doubt that the danger of foundering was imminent, although the position might not be altogether desperate.

Certainly Mr. Argyle was naturally courageous, and having been long distressed with his chronic fear of insolvency, he did not readily substitute for it any other fear.

The exciting scene which the tempest had evoked had lulled that other storm which had so long raged in his breast, and had produced a mental calm to which he had for many months been a stranger. Yet Frederick was sure that once or twice he saw that same strange light in the speculator's eyes which he had noticed—not without apprehension—on two preceding occasions.

But, whatever the cause of his present fortitude, it had a good effect upon his friends and upon some others who gathered around to listen to his encouraging words.

"The noise we all heard," said Mr. Argyle, "was caused by the breaking of the shaft of one of the wheels, an immense solid iron cylinder. It snapped off like a pipe-stem, air—like a pipe-stem. Clean and smooth as if it had been sawn. I want to see it, sir. It was wonderful—wonderful."

"Well—is that a very serious affair?" asked one of the passengers.

"Not at all; at least it wouldn't be but for this storm. You see the boat is crippled. She is like a bird with one wing. The wheel drags; they can't raise it and they can't use the other, except to turn the boat round and round like a tee-totum."

"I see."

"Then as they can't get any headway on her, they can't steer her, and she drifts and floats about like a cork. That's all. She gets into those great troughs all the while, then the waves wash over her broadside. Don't you see?"

"Oh, yes; but it seems to me a very bad case, even on your own statement."

"Baddish, perhaps," replied Argyle, "but not very bad. It would be nothing if it weren't for the storm."

"But it is for the storm," replied the other, pertinaciously. "The storm is here, howling all around us—the waves are really tremendous. I don't think I ever saw greater ones, and I have travelled a great deal. And I see no signs of their holding up."

"But they will hold up. Everything comes to an end, you know."

"I know, if the boat only last till then."

"It's a strong, staunch boat—very strong."

"So was the one that was lost last season. They're duplicates; came from the same yard; have got the same kind of machinery."

"Then they won't both be lost," said Argyle, angrily, "but if you think differently you are welcome to enjoy your opinion."

"I can't say that I enjoy it very much," replied

the stranger, "but I believe the danger is far greater than you imagine. How about the leak?"

"Oh, she leaks, of course, after such a straining, and the broken shaft knocked a little hole somewhere below the water line. But they've stuffed it full of beds and bolsters, and what not, and there are ten men watching it,"—up to their waists in water, he might have added—"and—the steam pump is going, and the water doesn't gain on us much."

"But it gains."

"Ye-as, rather, I believe; it wouldn't, however, if it weren't for the storm."

"I see—and the storm wouldn't hurt us if it weren't for the leak; and we might stand both if the shaft weren't broken, and we could get headway on the boat, and make for the port. Is that it?"

"Just as you please."

"It seems to me we are as near being totally wrecked as you can come to it and yet stop short of it. It's best to look things in the face, and be prepared for the worst."

"I think it isn't best to be frightened before we are hurt."

"Very well. Perhaps you are right, sir. I am very glad to hear encouraging words. As for me, if this little girl were safely at home with her mother I should be free from the most of my anxiety. She is my grand-daughter."

Argyle, now seeming to notice the child for the first time, patted her on the head, and said:

"Don't cry; you'll be picking flowers this time to-morrow. Don't cry."

She looked trustfully up to him, and smiled, and tried to repress her sobs.

"You have a large netter there," resumed the old gentleman, quickly and anxiously—it was the point which he had been approaching from the first; "it would float more than three I should think—three with life-preservers on I mean, as they would only have to hold on with their hands. I could get nothing—nothing; I have tried everywhere, but everything is appropriated. She is very light and small—she is indeed!"

It would be difficult to describe the quick, eager manner in which this was said; and Ada, who had been listening tremblingly to the conversation, was the first to reply.

"Oh, yes, father! Let her share it with us. It can't make matters much worse," she said; for her sympathy now transcended her fears, and, indeed, allayed them.

So surely does a regard for the welfare of others bring its reward.

Argyle, who had not comprehended the indirect petition, moved along, and said:

"Certainly; sit down, both of you. There is room enough. Sit down, and keep your feet out of the water."

"Oh, I do not mean that!" responded the grandfather; "but when the—if the boat should sink—"

"Boah! The boat isn't going to sink," said the other. "If she do you may both get on of course."

"Not I! I do not ask for myself, for five might be too many; but she is light—very light."

"Not without you, grandpa!" exclaimed the girl, pressing closer to his side. "No, no! It will hold you too; he is light too; oh, indeed—indeed he is, sir. You will let him come on it, won't you, sir?"

"Yes, yes—never fear, my dear. You can both come on now, and make sure. Yes, yes, I'm captain of this craft, and I can take as many aboard as I choose. There, sit down, all of you. Sit down, Rashleigh! You don't want to start yet, do you? You are willing to wait here till the boat does sink, are you not?"

A faint laugh—very faint—responded to these remarks, for it was impossible to avoid catching some hope and cheer from the fearless man's demeanour; but laughter, of any dilation, sounded strange in the midst of that most appalling scene; for no signs of hope yet appeared, nor was there any diminution of the general consternation.

CHAPTER VI.

There was silence deep as death;
And the boldest held his breath
For a time. Campbell.

It was now about two o'clock in the morning. In a little more than an hour they might look for daylight, for it was in the month of June that these events occurred.

Yet Argyle could not be said to be anxious, or if so he concealed his fears admirably, and did much to divert the minds of his friends from the horrors around them.

Rashleigh assisted him in this endeavour when the garrulity of the speculator gave him a chance, and his equanimity went farther towards reassuring Ada than the confidence of her father.

"He is always sanguine and hopeful on all subjects," she said to Fred, while Argyle was talking noisily to the old gentleman. "He doesn't believe in the panic in trade, and says that business will be

more flourishing than ever next year. That is his nature; but I have known him to make mistakes, and he may be wrong now."

"We may as well believe him right," replied Rashleigh, "so that we neglect no means of safety. But that reminds me that we ought to have some food, in case our condition should become serious, as your father says. I will go and see if any can be procured."

"Oh, pray do not leave us," Ada answered, impulsively; "the crisis may be very near, and you will throw away the little chance which this settee affords us. Mr. Shelburn says the small boats are surrounded by a crowd of twice as many people as can possibly get into them."

"I should not go near them in any event. I think there is time to get the provisions, and it may be very important to us. I will ask your father."

Argyle said "go" of course. It was well thought of. They would want breakfast before long, and, as for him, he began to feel hungry already.

So Frederick went to look for rations, and as this was something that few of the frightened multitude had had the foresight to think about he succeeded admirably. He found the cook's galley and pantries quite deserted, and he returned laden with a basket of biscuits and cake, and some liberal slices of cold boiled ham, all of which he carried rather furtively, lest he might be despoiled of his treasures by the way.

Argyle looked eagerly into the basket, then handed it around among his party, compelling all to take something, after which he helped himself, and began to eat with great seeming relish.

When he had finished his lunch he turned to Fred, and said:

"I'll tell you what it is, Rashleigh, I have a flask of cordial down below, and I'm going to get it. A swallow of it will be good for us all, after this exposure."

"Let me go," said the young man. "I'm smaller than you, and can get through the crowd more easily."

"No, you can't. You can't push them aside as I can. You are too modest."

Before Ada could more than begin a remonstrance he was off, unheeding her, and he was absent so long that she became very uneasy about him, especially as more alarming tidings began to reach them of the gain of the water, and that the men who had watched at the main leak had been obliged to abandon their post, where they could no longer render any aid.

Argyle returned, however, at last, with his prize, and seemingly much excited; but it was not about the bad news from the leak, for he had not heard that.

"Great crowd there too," he said, "and the stairs full, some going up and some coming down, and all asking questions. No one seems to know what they want to do. Furniture all taken. Two lounges tied together with ropes on the after deck with the backs outward, so as to make a kind of boat. Three ladies and two children in it, and two men keeping guard over it, and growling when anybody comes near. 'This is ours—this is ours—it won't hold any more.'"

"Oh, father!" exclaimed Ada, again beginning to cry. "Isn't it terrible? And the leak—"

"You didn't hear me out. A frantic woman came up to them with a baby and begged one of the ladies to take it in. She would not do it, and ordered her off. I said to them:

"Ladies, pray don't let fear make savages of you. Take the child in. It will be your passport to Heaven if you get drowned."

"So she did—she took it in and said she was so frightened she did not know what she was doing. I daresay she wasn't a hard-hearted woman, but they're frantic with fear. Just as if they had not got to die some time. What difference does a few years make if the heart is right?"

"Sure enough—sure enough," said the old gentleman, emphatically.

"Then as I was coming away I saw a young man with two life-preservers on. I caught him by the arm, and said:

"Haven't you got more than your share, sir? Are you not ashamed to be going about here with two of these things on when there are fifty people on this boat without any?"

"He was a slim, foppish-looking fellow, with studs, and rings, and black hair, and a curling black moustache, which made his pale face look as white as chalk."

"What did he say?"

"He said:

"Sir, I can't thwim, and I want to make thurs. They were both in my berth, and I took them. There's no scarcity. Everybody has got them except the deck passengers. They're half-price people, and are not entitled to them."

"And he began to walk off very fast. But I followed him, and told him he was acting a very selfish, unmanly part, and he told me to mind my own business."

"The puppy!" exclaimed Fred. "What did you do then?"

"I said I would. I'd mind my own business, and my business just then was with him. Then I called upon some of the men, and pointed him out, and told them he was going about with two life-preservers when there were dozens of poor men and women downstairs without any. They said that mustn't be, and one man seized and held him while I unbuckled one of the preservers, and a third man, a big, red-faced fellow, I am sorry to say, gave him a kick, and told him he deserved to have them both taken from him."

"Good! What did he say to that?"

"He said we were very unswivel, and he'd take the law of us if he ever got ashore, and the red-faced man told him 'all right' and if he ever met him on shore he would give him another kick, so that he'd have a better cause of action."

"What did you do with the preserver?"

"I don't know. One of the men took it, and went in search of some one who needed it."

Mr. Shelburn, who was standing near, started hurriedly off when he heard this, in hopes of obtaining it, but he did not succeed, as it had been bestowed upon a poor woman who had an infant to take care of.

"It seems incredible that there should be such human swine in the world, walking erect, and looking like Christians," said Argyle, whose indignation had not yet subsided.

"Oh, that's nothing," replied Vulcan. "There was a man out on the bow-deck there a little while ago who had put a life-preserver on his dog! I saw him!"

"On his dog? Is it possible?"

"Yes, sir; he had one on himself and one on his dog—a handsome, fawn-coloured greyhound."

"I hope you took it away from him."

"A crowd of passengers pitched into him just as he got it fastened on, and they not only took it away but they threw the poor hound overboard, they were so angry, you see."

"Ah, that was unnecessary cruelty, but I do not wonder."

Mr. Rolfe, who had withdrawn for a while into one of the cabins, now reappeared, making earnest inquiries about the prospect, and Rashleigh, on seeing him, told Mr. Argyle about his purchase, for the speculator had not been present when that strange bargain was made.

"Well," he said, "that's lucky for Shelburn, and I don't know that it was any too much for a man of great wealth to give. He might have died of fright if he had had no life-preserver; but I think he will regret giving anything to-morrow. I do not think the danger is very—wh—what's that? Who's that speaking? Hey? What does he say?"

On listening they all perceived that some one was addressing the noisy crowd from a near eminence, and was trying very hard to make them hear; and soon other voices cried:

"Hush! Hark! It's the captain!"

Yes, it was the captain; not, alas, bringing words of cheer, but proclaiming the imminence of the danger, and informing the passengers that he had no longer any hope of saving the vessel.

"The water gains upon us very fast," he said; "the pump will soon be useless, and the boat is slowly settling down. She may float two hours yet, or even three; but it is hardly probable, and, as we are many miles from shore—"

"How do you know? How do you know that?" asked Argyle, loudly. "If we have been drifting in the dark all this time how can you tell where we are?"

"I give you my opinion, and I have no object in giving you any opinion except to enable you to judge of the extent of the danger, and to do the best that you can for yourselves."

"What can we do?"

"That is what I am going to tell you. We have no materials for a raft, and the four boats, although large, will not hold half of you, with the least prospect of their living in such a sea as this. If there is any way to decide who shall go in them, and to compel acquiescence in the decision by those who are not to go, I should advise trying them. If not don't try them, for they will assuredly be swamped as fast as they are lowered, and every soul in them will probably be lost. I can do nothing unless the gentlemen on this boat will stand by me and agree to obey my orders. My authority with my crew and hands has ceased; with two or three exceptions, they will no longer obey me, and are looking out for their own safety."

"We will stand by you, captain!" shouted Argyle.

"I don't know about that!" cried another loud voice. "It depends on what he is going to do."

"Ay, there it is! You'll obey me—if you choose. That amounts to nothing."

"You have no right to order us."

"I have a right to order the boats, and say how many shall go in them."

"But not say who they shall be. First come first served is the only rule in such a case as this. One man's life is as good as another's, captain! At least it's as dear to him."

"Very true; but that's no reason why we should all throw our lives away. Let us be reasonable."

"Let's have a committee," cried another—"a committee of ten to decide what shall be done, and we'll all abide by what they say. What say you to that?"

"I have no right to resign my authority over the vessel, gentlemen, but if you choose to appoint a Committee of Safety I will do my best to further their views if they are consistent with my duty to those who placed me in command."

"That's right—that's very proper," answered Argyle. "A committee let it be, then, and let it be appointed by the captain, for he is acquainted with many of the passengers—"

"He is acquainted with you, I suppose," interposed a captious voice.

"And probably none of the rest of us knows ten men here," continued the speculator, not heeding the interruption. "What say you, gentlemen? Shall the captain appoint the committee? Those in favour of his doing so will please signify it by saying 'ay.'"

The response was pretty general, and as the opposing vote, when called, was evidently small the measure was pronounced carried, and the captain, who in view of the disaster at hand had secured the passenger list about his person, proceeded with it to the vicinity of one of the lamps, and quickly selected and called off the desired quota of names.

Mr. Argyle headed the list, and when it was called a voice in the crowd said:

"I thought so! The committee won't take care of themselves and their families first, I suppose. Oh, no—not at all! I won't have anything to do with committees."

Some cheers followed this speech, but Argyle's loud, clear voice again rang above the tumult, and as he was standing on the settee his portly figure was pretty plainly visible.

"Will that man please to show himself?" he said.

"Oh, yes—here I am," responded the other, encouraged by the applause he had received, and a short, thick, grim-looking, but well-dressed man, with his hat set defiantly on one side of his head, emerged from a dense part of the crowd into a small open space, not far from Argyle.

"You say you won't have anything to do with the committee," said the latter. "But remember they may have something to do with you. We are placed in authority here by the will of the majority. Gentlemen, take a good look at this man who refuses to obey you—this mutineer, I may say. Now let's see if there is any more of them. Come, show yourselves. Whoever is going to oppose the committee's action, step forward!"

No one came, but one gruff voice in the back-ground answered:

"I'll oppose it if it don't suit me."

"Very well; we'll see that it is enforced, notwithstanding your opposition. Go on, captain, and give us the rest of the names."

This was quickly done, and when they were all announced there proved to be a lawyer and two clergymen among them, one of the latter being Annesley, the grandfather of the child who was in Argyle's party. Mr. Rolfe's name was also on the list.

These proceedings, of course, had been conducted amid much noise and many objections and calls and jeers, and no one could be distinctly heard who did not shout at the top of his voice.

"Put Higg on the committee!" the gruff voice shouted.

"Who's Higg?" asked another.

"There he is," answered the man, elbowing his way through the crowd, and pointing out the first grumbler. "He's a mechanic. We don't want all lawyers and ministers and rich men."

"Gentlemen," replied the captain, "the list is full. There are already two mechanics on it. Your rights will all be respected."

"Put Higg on!" repeated the voice.

"We'll put him overboard first!" replied Argyle, with the voice of a Stentor. "Come, gentlemen, let us get together to consult; there is no time to be lost."

The action of the committee was speedy and to the point.

They decided first that all the women and children, and all the men above sixty years of age, should go in the boats, together with an officer for each boat, the captain to be one and the others to be selected by him.

As of the remainder of the men, according to the captain's judgment, only one third could be safely taken, it was resolved to select them in the following manner, it being the most expeditious and impartial mode which could be thought of in the emergency.

The men, including such of the committee as were

under sixty years of age, were to assemble in a compact circle amidships, and one of the old gentlemen being blindfolded was to be led into the ring to pick out the first man.

Then, counting from him, every third man was to be selected to go, and the remaining two-thirds were to stay on the steamboat and take their chances on the furniture or whatever they could find that could float.

The crew were not to be designated as oarsmen, but they were to take an equal chance with others in this drawing of lots, and those who were drawn were to do the rowing in conjunction and by turns with the passengers.

When the plan was announced most of the passengers pronounced it fair, and pledged themselves to aid in carrying it out. But there were some grumblers and not a few who suggested amendments.

One shrill voice called out, eagerly:

"Gentlemen—you ought to take all thoth that can't thwim."

Argyle, looking at him, recognized the exquisite from whom he had taken the life-preserver.

"Very well," he said, "so we will, but we must throw them overboard first and try them, for it won't do to trust to men's words at such a time."

This raised a laugh despite the solemnity of the occasion—but it was a laugh which sounded not unlike a wail—then another speaker asked:

"How are you going to decide then about the men over sixty years of age?"

"The committee must decide by their looks. There is no other way."

Daylight began to appear through the thick haze—a dull, dim light it was, though—which admitted of but very limited vision and revealed nothing except a dreary waste of foaming water and a leaden-coloured sky.

Yes, it revealed something more than this, for it showed on all sides haggard faces and tearful eyes and trembling limbs which the darkness had mercifully concealed from view. But it disclosed some serene and trustful faces too, some calmness and resignation, some looks which said plainly and more eloquently than any voice could have spoken the hallowed words "Thy will be done."

Ada had not relapsed into unconsciousness, nor did she in any way exhibit that extreme terror which had at first overpowered her. She was very pale, and sometimes replied to the words with which Rashleigh tried to encourage her, for she was left solely to his charge after her father had assumed his quasi-official duties.

Yet she seemed to have no hope of escape, and from time to time she committed to Frederick's keeping little souvenirs for her mother and sister, and charged him with loving messages to them, to be delivered if he escaped the impending danger.

"I have no hope for myself," she said; "and, as to going in one of the boats, I certainly shall not unless father be drawn to go. I would rather go with him on the scutty than without him in the boat."

Frederick remonstrated against this decision, reminding her that there was a reasonable prospect of escape in the one case, but that in the other she might die from exposure in the water, even if she were not drowned.

Nothing, however, would change her determination in this respect, and her companion forbore to urge her, although his solicitude for her safety was so great that he almost forgot his own peril.

The sudden attachment which he had conceived for this fair girl had been strengthened by their mutual peril, and it seemed to him as if he had known her for a lifetime instead of the few days during which they had been aboard that ill-fated vessel.

"I will resign my place in the boat to you, Mr. Rashleigh, if you should not be drawn," she said. "I shall have that right I suppose."

"Not for the world would I quit your side while you are in such peril, Miss Argyle," replied the young man. "I will assist to protect you till my last breath. Believe me, I have no thought or hope disconnected with your safety, and I would most gladly die to insure it."

This was strong language, but the generous youth meant it all.

"You are too good to me," she said. "I have no right to such devotion at your hands. You have other friends. Think of them, and of your duty to them."

"I do; I do. My duty to them is not to disgrace myself by deserting you."

The momentous business of deciding who were to be admitted into the small boats, and who were to be left upon the sinking vessel, was meanwhile rapidly progressing.

The circle was forming—very dense and compact it had to be to take in all the crowd in the largest space which could be allotted to it—and Frederick was summoned from Ada's side by some one who told him to take his place in it if he wished to get his chance.

He went; for Argyle might be drawn, then his daughter would also go in the boats, and the privilege of accompanying her thus in comparative safety would be beyond all value.

The captain had selected the officers—himself being one, for such had been the decision of the committee—and the committee had decided rapidly and without very close scrutiny upon the men who claimed to be above sixty years old, rejecting many anxious claimants, and among them some who were evidently not quite forty, although they had resorted to every imaginable device to make themselves appear old.

Mr. Rolfe and Mr. Annesley were among the exempt, while Mr. Argyle, who lacked less than a year of the age of privilege, and might easily have been accepted, declined to make the claim, but took his place in the ring.

When all were stationed, Mr. Annesley, being first effectually blindfolded for the purpose, was led aside the circle of anxious men, where he turned himself around three or four times, to make it more certain that he could not be guided in his choice by any intelligence of his own or of those who had conducted him.

He then proceeded to lay his hands upon the first man, whose selection was to decide the fate of all the rest, and from that instant all were busy, with blanched cheeks, in counting the persons who intervened between themselves and the first exempt, and thus anticipating their own doom.

Mr. Rolfe now went to Mr. Annesley's assistance, and, the shawl which had nearly enveloped the head of the latter being removed, they proceeded to lead out of the line every third person, taking down his name as they did so.

To Rashleigh's great joy Mr. Argyle was among the chosen third, but, alas! he himself was left with the hapless majority who were to remain on the lost steamer. Mr. Shelburn was also of this number, as was the foppish young man—soiled and slovenly enough now—who had exhibited such great pusillanimity, and he did not hesitate to cry like an infant and beg piteously to be taken into one of the boats. The large man whom we have called Vulcan, the father of the crippled boy, was among the fortunate class, a fact which he no sooner ascertained than he announced it to his listening child by shouting, gleefully:

"All right, Charley dear. I'm to go with you."

(To be continued.)

MYSTERY OF THE HAUNTED GRANGE.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"HAPPY Miss Lisle!" remarked Mr. Stedman; "I think I have heard of her. But you don't imagine you are going to have everything your own way there. Handsome young ladies, with eighty thousand down on their wedding-day, generally find more than one admirer."

"I mean to marry her," Lord Montalien said, shortly. "We won't discuss that question. Let me see. Guy speaks of going up to town to-morrow evening—why should not Alice travel with him?"

"And he be set down as the companion of her flight! Not half a bad idea. Well, my lord, suppose now you go and talk the matter over to Miss Warren, as everything depends on her consent, and upon your return I will pack my portmanteau and run up by the earliest train."

Lord Montalien seized his hat, and grasped Mr. Stedman's hand with a cordiality very unwonted with him.

"You are the prince of good fellows, Gus! Believe me I shall not forget this."

He wrung his hand, dropped it, hurried through the open window, and disappeared.

Mr. Stedman looked after his retreating figure, and the ominous smile, the latent gleam, were very apparent now.

"No, my lord of Montalien, I don't mean you shall forget this. I think before the week ends I shall wipe out that old grudge about poor Fanny Dashon."

Lord Montalien strode through the dewy meadows and the short sweet grass, full of triumph and exultation. For Francis Earls court, from earliest boyhood, to set his heart upon anything was to strain heaven and earth to compass his ends. Years might come and go, but he remained faithful to his purpose. "Always Faithful," the motto of the Earls courts, was never more strikingly exemplified than in him. By fair means or by foul he must win Alice Warren.

He found her where he knew she was always to be met with at this calm evening hour—milking. Flower, and Daisy, and Moon stood around her, the sweet scent of new-mown hay filled the air, the vespersongs of the birds rang down the pastoral stillness, the last golden glimmer of sunset was fading in the clear

gray sky. All things looked fair and sweet; and fairest, sweetest of all was the girl who rose with a blush and a smile to greet her lover.

"Come with me, Alice," he said. "I have something to say to you—something you must hear at once."

She went with him across the long fields to the gloom and solitude of the distant fir plantation. Even in the heat of his wooing and success he could remember prudence. Beneath the sombre shadow of the trees he passed his arm around her waist and whispered his proposal. Would she be his wife—secretly, of course, but his wife?

The girl lifted two large, searching eyes to his face, and clasped both hands round his arm.

"Frank!" she cried, "your wife—your very wife! I, the bailiff's daughter—you, Lord Montalien! Do I hear you aright? Do you mean it?"

"More than I ever meant anything. Why not, my Alice?—you are fair enough and good enough to be a queen, and who is there to say me nay? Only for the present it must be private—strictly private, remember. Not a whisper of your secret to a living soul."

Then in soft, caressing tones he told her what she was to do. To steal quietly from home, and take the 8-50 train for London, to go to a quiet hotel, whose address he would send her, and wait there for him until the following day. And an hour after his arrival they would drive together to some obscure church and be married. Would she consent?

Consent! She clasped her hands closer around his arm, her fair face rosy with joy.

"Frank, to be your wife I would risk, would do anything. Only some day soon, soon after our marriage, you will let me write and tell father and mother. I can't bear that they—"

"Of course not. After our marriage you shall tell them everything. Don't fail, and, by the way, if you should meet my brother at the station you can travel under his protection. Not a syllable to him, of course, for the present at least. If you love me as you say, Alice, you will be content to wait a little before I present you to the world as Lady Montalien."

If she loved him! the innocent eyes looking up to him were full of deathless devotion. They smote him—heartless, selfish as he was—they smote him, the loving, faithful eyes of the girl he was betraying.

A great bell clanged out over the woods, the dressing-bell at the Priory. He stooped hastily and kissed her.

"Good-bye, my Alice—for the last time. On the day after to-morrow we will meet in London to part no more."

It was done! He hurried away through the fir woods, and along to the Priory, triumphant. He had won! he always won—the prize he had wooed so long was his at last!

Augustus Stedman still sat where he had left him, alone in the shimmering dusk.

He said but two words as he strode in and passed him:

"All right."

Half an hour later, as a second loudly clanging bell clashed down the evening stillness, Alice Warren entered her father's house. Supper awaited, but what cared she for supper? Her heart was full of bliss, too intense for smiles or words. She was going to be his loving wife.

Mathew Warren took down the big, well-worn family Bible presently, and read aloud the nightly chapter. By what strange chance was it that he selected the story of Mary Magdalene, that sombre, pathetic story? And then the nightly prayers were offered, and the girl said good-night in a voice that trembled—the last good-night the sweet lips ever spoke in the house she had gladdened for twenty peaceful years. She took her light, and stole up to her room—not to go to bed—not to sleep.

The clocks of Speckhaven were striking nine. The harvest moon flooded the green earth with crystal glory and shamed her feeble candle. She blew it out, and sat down by the open window to look at the great, white summer stars and think of her lover.

How great he was, how good, how generous, how noble, how handsome! Was there a king, among all the kings of the world, half so kingly, half so brave!

She loved him, and she was to be his wife—all was said in that. It was not for his rank she cared—that only frightened her—she loved Francis Earls court, and was glib to be his wife.

She sat there in a trance of bliss until past midnight. The new day had come, the day in which she was to fly from home. She thought of her father and mother with a sharp pang in the midst of her joy.

They would know the glad truth soon, of course, but meantime they would suffer, they would miss

her. If she only dared write to them—but no—she dare not, she would say too much.

"I will write to Polly," she thought; "I must tell her."

She arose softly, re-lit her candle, and sat down to write. The few words she had to say were soon written:

"MY OWN DARLING,—I must speak one word to you before I go—before I go away from my home, my dear, dear home, to be married. Yes, Paulina—Alice is to be married to one she loves—oh, so dearly—so dearly—the best, the noblest of men on earth. Some day you will know his name, and what a happy, happy girl I am. Until then love me, and trust always your own ALICE."

She addressed this brief note to Paris, to "Mademoiselle Paulina Lisle." She kissed the name, she took the lock from her neck, and kissed the pictured face.

"Darling little Polly," she said, "to think that when next we meet Alice will be a lady too."

Then at last she said her prayers, and went to bed. But the bright broad day was shining gloriously in before the happy eyes were sealed by sleep—the new day—the beginning of a new life.

CHAPTER XXIX.

EARLY on the following morning Mr. Augustus Stedman "took a run up to town." And late in the evening Mr. Guy Earls court was driven down from the Priory to catch the last express.

The gray of the summer evening was fast deepening to darkness as Mr. Guy Earls court jumped out, and ran to the office for his ticket. In two minutes the train would start—one of these minutes he spent at the ticket-office, the other in lighting a cigar and looking about him.

Half a dozen loungers were scattered about the platform, and, save himself, there was but another passenger—who wore a close black veil, and carried a small bag in her hand.

Something in this lonely female figure, standing there in the gloaming, something familiar, made the young guardsman look again. She saw the glance, and came gliding up to him, and laid one timid hand upon his arm.

"Mr. Guy."

"Alice!"

She had not lifted the close mask of black lace, but he recognized the voice, the whole form, the instant she spoke.

"Yes, Mr. Guy—I am going to London, and—and I am frightened to go alone. Might I—would you—"

"Now then, sir," cried the guard, holding open the door of the first-class compartment. "Look sharp, if you please."

"This way, Alice," exclaimed Guy, and the three words, spoken in half a whisper, reached the ears of the guard, to be graven on his professional memory, and destined to be repeated years after with such deadly peril to the unconscious speaker.

There was no time for parley, no time for questions or remonstrance. He assisted her in, sprang after, the whistle shrieked, and the express train flew away through the darkening night.

"Now then, Miss Alice Warren, explain yourself! What does a young lady from Speckhaven mean by running away to London at this improper hour, and alone? I give you my word I should as soon have expected to behold the Czarina of all the Russias at the station as you."

Her veil was still down—its friendly shelter hid the burning, painful blush that overspread the girl's face, but he could see she shrank and trembled.

"I am obliged to you, Mr. Guy."

"You are, eh? I hope for everybody's sake my old friend Mathew knows all about it. If he does he ought to be ashamed of himself for letting his pretty daughter run wild up to London. Where is Peter Jenkins too—the sturdy miller—that he doesn't look better after his little alliance?"

"I am not his affianced," Alice replied, between a laugh and a sob; "I never was. My father and mother don't know I've come—please don't blame them, Mr. Guy."

"Then, Alice, are you quite sure you ought to have come at all? It is no business of mine, that is certain, but, for old friendship's sake—we were always good friends, Alice, you know—I should like you to tell me what is taking you to London."

There were a gravity and an earnestness in his tone and face very unusual. He was the last man in the world to turn censor of other men and women; if they went all wrong, and came to grief, why, it was only the usual lot and what had happened to himself.

Frank might do precisely as he pleased—it was no affair of his, or any man's—and with a woman of the world Guy would have thought it a pretty equal contest, where a fair field and no favour were all either had a right to expect. But this was different—this

fresh-hearted, little country girl whom he had known from childhood. "As in a glass darkly" he saw the truth, and for once in his life felt actually called upon to remonstrate.

"Alice," he said, "I don't want to pry into any secret of yours; you know your own affairs best of course—but is this a wise step you are taking? Think before it is too late, and turn back while there is yet time."

"There is no time. It is too late. I would not turn back if I could."

She spoke more firmly than he had ever heard her. She was thinking that this time to-morrow she would be Frank's wife.

"You know best. Pardon my interference. At least you will permit me to see you to your destination."

She took from her purse a slip of paper and handed it to him.

"I am going there. If you will take me to it I shall be very, very thankful."

"Mrs. Howe, 20, Gilbert's Gardens, Tottenham Court Road," read Guy. "Ah, I don't know. Gilbert's Gardens sounds rural though. Yes, Miss Warren, I will certainly see you there; and now, with your permission, will read the evening paper."

Silence fell between them. Alice Warren put back her veil and looked out at the flying night-scene.

The sky was overcast—neither moon nor stars being visible. How weird, how unearthly this wild night-flight seemed to her. What would she have done but for Mr. Guy? He looked to her almost as a guardian angel in her loneliness and strangeness. If it were possible to think anything but what was good of Frank she might have fancied it a little cruel, a little selfish, sending her thus away alone to that big, pitiless, terrible London. But Frank knew best, and this time to-morrow she would be his wife. Her heart throbbed with the joy, the terror of the thought.

It was close upon midnight when the countless lamps of London first shone before the country girl's dazed eyes. The bustle and uproar of the station terrified her; she clung in affright to Mr. Earls court's arm, then they were in a four-wheeled cab, whirling rapidly away to Gilbert's Gardens.

"It's rather an unearthly hour," remarked Guy, looking at his watch. "I only hope Mrs. Howe is prepared to receive us."

Mrs. Howe was. Mr. Stedman had arranged that as well as other matters; and Miss Warren was affably received by a thin little woman, with a pinched nose and a wintry smile.

Alice gave her hand to her companion with a glance of fearful gratitude.

"Thank you very much, Mr. Guy—I don't know how I should have got here but for you. Good-night, and, oh, please—" pitiously—"don't say anything to anybody down home about having met me."

"Certainly not, Alice—good-night."

He had reached the door when a sudden impulse struck him, and he turned back. He took both her hands in his own and looked kindly, pityingly down in the sweet, tear-wet face.

"Little Alice," he said, "I'm a good-for-nothing fellow, but I have a very tender regard for you. If ever you find yourself in trouble of any kind I wish you'd come to me. I'll help you if I can. Here is an address to which you can write at any time, and if ever you call upon me I will never fail you."

The dark, handsome face, the brown, earnest eyes swam before the girl in a hot mist. If he had been her brother he could hardly have felt more tenderly towards her than at that moment. Trouble! He knew, if she did not, what dark and bitter trouble was in store for her, and he was helpless to ward it off.

"I've had the fortune to come across a good many inscrutable cards in my time," he thought as he took his departure, "but for inscrutability Monti puts the topper on the lot. What a consummate scoundrel he is; and what an inconceivable idiot that poor child! Of course he's going to marry her—nothing else would have induced a girl like that to take such a step."

Mrs. Howe led the way upstairs with a simper on her faded face.

"I know all about it, miss," she whispered, confidentially: "the young man as was here this morning—a most genteel young man he is—told me that you was going to be married, you know, miss, and that is the gentleman of course, a military gentleman, as one may see, and the very handsomest as I ever set eyes on."

Alice shrank away almost with dread. How dare Mr. Stedman tell this strange woman her secret? She entered her room—a neat little apartment enough, but insufferably close and stuffy, as it seemed to the country girl, used to the fresh breath of the German Ocean and the sweet breeze of the Lincolnshire wold.

She closed and locked the door, and sank down on her knees by the bedside, her hat and shawl still on, with an overpowering sense of desolation and loneliness. What were they doing at home? What did they think of her? They would miss her at the hour for evening prayers, and they would search for her in vain. She could see her mother's scared, white face, her father's stern and angry. Oh, what a bad, cruel girl she was, thinking only of herself and her own happiness, and never caring for the grief she was leaving behind. Very soon they would know the truth, that she was the happy wife of Lord Montalien, but until then what grief, what shame, what fear, would she not make them suffer!

A clock in the neighbourhood struck three.

She had scarcely slept the night before—involuntarily her eyes were closing now. She got up in a kind of stupor, removed her outer clothing, threw herself, half-dressed, upon the bed, and slept deeply, dreamlessly until morning.

It was broad day when she awoke and started up—nine o'clock of a dull, rainy morning. The crashing noises without half-stunned her for a moment, until she realized she was in London.

It was her wedding-day! She sprang up with a bound and ran to the window. The ceaseless rain was falling—a dim, yellow fog filled the air—the sky was the hue of lead. The dreary prospect, the muddy street, the dismal-looking figures with unfurled umbrellas, passing beneath, struck with a chill to her heart. Was it an omen of evil that the sun had not shone on her wedding-day?

She washed and dressed herself—the landlady brought her up breakfast, and she sat down by the window.

Mr. Stedman called—she was glad to see even him then, though down at home she had disliked him. Everything was in readiness, Mr. Stedman told her—she might look for Lord Montalien a little before six o'clock.

In Gilbert's Gardens the dark, rainy day was closing already, and yellow lamps glimmered athwart the fog.

Half-past five; a quarter to six—oh, would he never come? She had worked herself up into a fever of longing and impatience when a hansom whirled up to the door, a man very much muffled leaped out and rushed up the stairs, and with a cry of joy Alice flung herself into the arms of her lover.

"Oh, Frank, Frank—I thought you would never come!"

He was so closely muffled that the eyes of love alone could have recognized him. He looked flushed and eager as a prospective bridegroom should.

"Dress yourself as quickly as possible, Alice," he said, hurriedly; "we will drive to the church at once."

In five minutes the girl's straw hat and simple shawl were on. She drew her veil over her face, and with a beating heart was led by her lover to the cab.

A second more and they were whirling away, and the curious eyes of the landlady were removed from the window.

"I could not see his face," she remarked, afterwards; "he was that muffled up, and his hat was that pulled over his eyes, but I know it was the same military gent as brought her the night before."

The church of St. Ethelfrida was a very long way removed from Gilbert's Gardens. It was a small and dingy edifice, in a small and dingy court. There was not a soul to observe them, only a solitary cab waiting round the corner, from which Mr. Stedman sprang to meet them.

An old woman in patters opened the church door—and she and Mr. Stedman were to constitute the witnesses of the ceremony.

They saw a young man in a surplice standing behind the rails with a book in his hand.

Lord Montalien led the palpitating little figure on his arm up the aisle, and in less than ten minutes the young man in the surplice had gabbled through the ceremony and pronounced Francis Earls court and Alice Warren man and wife.

A fee was slipped from the palm of the bridegroom into that of the young man in the surplice. Alice received her "marriage lines," and all was over.

At the church door the bridegroom stopped to shake hands with his faithful friend and accomplice.

"You're a trump, Stedman! Believe me, I shall not forget what you have done for me to-night."

Mr. Stedman, with his hands in his pockets, and that pale, ominous smile on his lips, watched bride and bridegroom re-enter their cab and drive away; then he laughed to himself—a soft, low laugh.

"No, most noble lord; I don't think you will forget in a hurry what I have done for you to-day. I was to be the cat's-paw, was I?—the linger-on who was to do your dirty work, and take my reward in being told I am a trump? In six weeks from

now, if I'm hard up, I shall know where to call, and trust to your gratitude for a cheque for a couple of thousand; and I think that other little score, five years old, is pretty clearly wiped out at last."

CHAPTER XXX.

WHEN Guy Earlescourt told Alice Warren that he was "a good-for-nothing sort of fellow" he uttered a fact in which he would have found a great many people agree. As fast as man could tread that broad, sunlit, flower-strewn highway known as the "Road to Ruin," Lieutenant Guy Earlescourt had been treading it for the past three years.

Ever since when at twenty years of age he had begun his new, bright life as fledgling guardsman and emancipated Etonian, he had been going the pace with a recklessness and mad extravagance that knew neither bounds nor pause. He was but four months past three-and-twenty now, and over head and ears in debt, and irretrievably ruined.

Just one year and a half ago his father had died, away in Syria, of typhoid fever. Amid strangers, in a strange land, Nugent, Lord Montalien's long exile of sixty years had abruptly ended. He drifted out of life as quietly, as thoroughly self-possessed and gentlemanly as he had drifted through it. In his last hour there were no vain regrets or longings for home and friends. Once he had thought he would like to see Guy, but it was but a passing weakness; he did not wish a second time for what was impossible. It was rather a relief, on the whole, to go—to make an end of the general weariness and delusion of living.

His will had been made before he had quitted England. All that it was in his power to leave his second son he had left. It was not much as that son lived so recklessly—merely a drop in the vast ocean of his debts and expenditures.

His lordship had but one trouble—the thought of the girl whom Robert Hawksley had left in his charge. Whom should he appoint guardian in his own stead?

He thought over all the men he knew, and there was not one among them suitable, or, if suitable, willing to undertake the troublesome duty. He had almost given up the problem in despair when Sir Vane Charteris suddenly appeared upon the scene. It was no premeditated meeting; it was the merest chance—if there be such a thing as chance—if the destiny that was shaping the ends of Pauline Lisle had not driven him thither. He was the one man whom his lordship had not thought of. A vague dislike and distrust of him had been in his mind ever since the day upon which Lady Charteris had made her passionate declaration that he had insulted her and that she would never forgive him.

Poor Lady Charteris! it mattered little whom she forgave now; she was the inmate of a madhouse! She had never recovered from that sudden illness down at Montalien; and three weeks from the time when her husband had taken her up to town her mind had entirely given way, and she had been ever since an inmate of a private asylum. Her delusion was a singular one. Sir Vane Charteris was not her husband, she persisted; her lawful husband was alive, and abroad, to whom she was always trying to write. And having placed his insane wife in safe keeping, and his daughter at a fashionable boarding-school, Sir Vane Charteris also set out to drown the great trouble of his life with night-seeing in distant lands.

At the close of a bright summer day he entered the little Syrian village where my lord lay dying. It seemed a Providence to the sick man. Almost the first words he spoke was the question—would he assume in his stead the guardianship of Pauline Lisle?

There rose up over the swarthy face of the baronet a flush that was not the rosy light of the eastern sunset. He had never thought of this! Among all the chances that were to place his wife's elder daughter in his power he had never thought of this! It was a moment before he could answer—a moment during which his face was turned far away from the dying man, and his black eyes gazed at the rainbow light in the Syrian sky. Then he said, very quietly:

"If it will relieve your mind, my lord, I will willingly accept the charge. With my unfortunate domestic affliction I had not thought of ever again making England my home, but my duty to my daughter, perhaps, should be paramount over every more personal grief. I will become Miss Lisle's guardian, and fulfil my duty to the best of my ability. She and Maud will be companions, and my sister Eleanor—Mrs. Galbraith, you recollect—will preside over my home."

The necessary documents were immediately drawn up; and that night, when the great white moon rose up out of the Orient, Nugent, Lord Montalien, lay white and cold in death.

(To be continued.)

HONEY-MOON.—It was the custom of the higher orders of Teutones, an ancient people who inhabited

the northern parts of Germany, to drink mead or methoglin, a beverage made with honey, for thirty days after every wedding. From this custom comes the expression, "to spend the honey-moon." Attila, King of Hungary, drank so freely of this liquor on his wedding-day that he was found suffocated at night, and with him expired the empire of the Huns.

VICTOR AND VANQUISHED.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Sigh no more, lady; sigh no more;
Men were deceivers ever;
One foot in sea and one on shore,
To one thing constant never. *Shakespeare.*

"ADORABLE mademoiselle, a million of thanks!" smiled La Mort, again kissing Lucia's hand. "Now listen, and if the tears flow I shall be at hand to wipe them away with the ardour of affection and sympathy."

"Monsieur le baron discovered some days ago that our brave and true knight Hereward had escaped from a cavern where his comrades in crime were unfortunately roasted in a conflagration which befell them; and that he and his long-necked servant were skulking in a certain locality some two days' ride from here."

"Monsieur le baron thereupon ordered off your adoring La Mort in pursuit of them, turning a deaf ear upon his desires to stay with Mademoiselle Lucia and console her in her mysterious malady. We ride night and day and reach the hamlet designated—are directed to an establishment deserted, where alarming lights and midnight smoke have been discovered, and where a party such as theirs are averted to be in possession. We search the house and discover no one but an Indian servant and a beautiful woman with eyes like stars reflected in a pool, teeth like strings of pearls, hair like a mantle, and skin of a golden brown—a Peri of Inde—a princess. She lay upon a royal couch, robed in a vestment of such alluring grace that—but youth is susceptible, and we shall not judge. Assured by her own blushing lips that the fugitive was not there, we retired, ashamed of our own intrusion."

"Mademoiselle Lucia, we had not been gone six hours when tidings reached us that the youth had been concealed during our search and was actually living in the ruined mansion with some of the insurgents and his servant, while the beautiful Eastern Venus lightened the dull hours for this fortunate Cupid. Back we rode and re-entered. It was past midnight; the taper still flickered, the couches were disordered, the ravishing perfumes of the princess still lingered on the air, but the Paradise was deserted."

"In that very chamber which we had before searched we found the traces of our fugitive—a dagger, charmingly mounted, which I saw Monsieur le baron and true do mighty battle with on the night of the skirmish. Behold, mademoiselle, a scarf from the waist of the languishing-eyed sultana, and the ancient cap of a gnomie, whom I well nigh died laughing at upon the night of the skirmish, no other than the squire with the neck a foot long. Mademoiselle, behold the relic!"

La Mort as he gaily spoke displayed the very dagger which Lucia had given with such a tender message to Hereward; waved a crimson scarf fringed with strings of delicate and fairy-like shells—surely the girdle of an Eastern lady; and held up the black velvet cap which Watt Slygreen had worn during the whole time of his stay at the Tower.

When he had come to the end of his narration Miss Chastelard's face was livid with an overwhelming emotion. She stared at him, and at the articles as he held them up, with eyes which burned hard and cold as black diamonds.

Her lips formed a word or two, but voicelessly; it seemed as if she had no strength left to exclaim against such a monstrous accusation.

Then she snatched her hand from La Mort's; the emerald ring fell between them, and she eyed it rolling across the black floor as if it were a serpent. "Alas, mademoiselle! boys are so apt to play fair ladies false," murmured the mocking voice of La Mort. She started, and a small vivid flame burned in the centre of each cheek, as if a brand of shame had touched her.

"Sir, your story is an infamous one," said she, clenching her teeth to keep down her strong passion; "but if it prove to be no misapprehension, you shall not find me ungrateful."

"Merci," bowed the captain; "the woman's name was Princess Badoura Bougala, from India. Monsieur le baron, tells me that Monsieur Hereward at their first interview stated he had come from India. Probably—"

"No more!" uttered Lucia, vehemently; "I see it all."

And she bowed her head on her bosom in bitter and crushing humiliation.

"Mademoiselle, you will allow me to console?" said La Mort, placing his arm round her drooping figure.

She bounded from him with a cry of wrath—he uttered an exclamation of sudden pain, and grew frightfully pale.

In extricating herself from him she had grasped his wrist—she looked at her hand—it was red with blood.

"What, monsieur!" she exclaimed, "have I hurt a wound?"

"No! not merely a scratch contracted in that gallant skirmish with your youthful Don Juan—"

"Silence, monsieur! But this scratch—does it bleed yet after two weeks?"

"It is in an awkward place," muttered La Mort, hastily winding his handkerchief round his wrist, "and riding last night opened it anew."

"Can you prove your story respecting Mr. Hereward?" asked the lady, with stern composure.

"I can give you but my word of honour, mademoiselle, and that of my lieutenant, who will tell the same tale without variation. Deign to accept my sincere condolences for the chagrin of finding so fair a mademoiselle as Lucia de Chastelard outwitted in the heart of a boy by a musky-strewn Hindoo girl."

With a burning brow Lucia bore with this insolence in silence, made a gesture of proud resentment, and hastily left the hall.

CHAPTER XXIV.

I wadnae ha'e your faithless heart,
Tis no your ain to gie. *Scottish Ballad.*

CAPTAIN LA MORT might walk with the baron's daughter in the fairy Italian garden where erst she had paced with Hereward; might bend over her tapestry frame in the long, bright autumn morning; might woo her with arts soft and entrancing as the wooing of the birds; but Lucia listened to all with stony mask and lips which smiled not.

Chastelard, basilisk-eyed and eager, watched the pair, and hounded on the willing captain to seek the hand of his daughter.

For sang froid La Mort was rich, and Chastelard loved wealth as much as he loved revenge. La Mort had offered him both for the hand of Lucia.

Some weeks had passed; the insurrection of the villagers had apparently been quelled, and Hereward had disappeared.

Since his escape from the empty hunting-box, on the night of the Stranger's visit, neither he nor his party had been heard of.

Chastelard feared and boasted alternately. La Mort bided his time, and made good his chances with the lady of his choice.

It was a stormy night; the wind was howling around the old Tower, and the waves were avirling at the foot of the cliff with a roar like thunder.

The ivy tapped upon the window-panes like the storm-tossed spirit of the tempest, and the rats scurried behind the wainscot, and rattled up the walls like ghostly fugitives.

Alone in her beautiful chamber Lucia de Chastelard still sat up, the only one awake in the gloomy Tower.

She sat in the mullioned window gazing into the night, and her bright hair and rich striped shawl of gold and purple formed a ravishing contrast as she leaned her pale cheek on her hand, and suffered the unbound tresses to fall heavily upon her half-draped shoulders.

She heard the tumult of the elements without interest, and saw the silent lightning glimmer by without fear—she was steeped in mournful reverie.

Is it the dark and glittering face of La Mort which flits across her view? Is it the passionate vows he has uttered to-day that steal to her ear?

Let these slow-rolling tears declare!

A cautious voice is calling at her door—yes—surely she heard a whisper.

"Lucia! Lucia!"

Who can this be that comes at the dead of night? Lucia was fearless—she never dreamed of danger—but rose immediately and unlocked the door.

A small, slight figure, muffled in a long, dark cloak, drew back into the darkness and gazed at her eagerly, then bounded past her into the room.

"Who is this?" demanded Miss Chastelard, amazed at the intrusion.

The stranger quickly shut the door, then dropped her mantle, and displayed the beautiful olive-brown face and jewelled hair of a young girl.

Miss Chastelard stood transfixed regarding this strange vision, and the young female clasped her dark but lovely hands, and murmured, pleadingly as a little child:

"You will listen to me if you are the lady who lives in this Tower—Lucia?"

"I am Lucia de Chastelard," said she; "but who are you that seek me at such an extraordinary hour?"

The girl threw herself at Lucia's feet, and kissed her black satin slipper with an impulsive gesture.

"I am one who loves the brave sabib," said she, clasping anew her hands; "and I have come here to do him a service."

"I do not understand. What!" She started back, growing very pale as the truth flashed upon her; "what sabib?"

"Hereward," breathed the stranger, with artless adoration.

Lucia's cheeks flushed scarlet, and her lips quivered; she gazed upon the truly ravishing being who knelt at her feet so imploringly.

"Tell me your name," she gasped.

"Badoura," answered the girl, with child-like confidence.

The pale English beauty and the rich dark houri regarded each other with a breathless scrutiny; the baron's daughter put her hand to her heart and panted as if in pain.

"La Mort spoke truth!" muttered she.

"La Mort?" repeated Badoura, eagerly. "Ah, yes, lady, he was the terrible man who searched for Hereward sabib, and he could not find him. We concealed the sabib until La Mort had gone. Yes, yes; he has told you that Badoura was there. One you not believe that Badoura comes from her dear sabib to do him good?"

"Why has Mr. Hereward sent you to me?" asked Lucia, in tones joy as the meaning of an Arctic sea.

"The sabib did not send me!" cried Badoura, with naive pride. "I have run away from him to beg you to give back the papers which the wicked baron stole from my sabib. I heard them speak of it three days ago, and planned to do this for Hereward."

"And how did you think I would help you, madame?"

"Slygreen told Hereward sabib that all was not lost while Lucia loved him as she did; and I was glad, because I knew that when a woman loves she will serve her dear sabib."

"Mr. Hereward's servant told him that?" cried Miss Chastelard, her eyes flashing.

"Yes, lady," answered the Hindoo maiden, with a wistful look at the white and rigid face; "and the sabib laughed at his servant, then became angry and cried that he was ruined by his past madness. Lucia, lady, I do not know what he meant by those words, they were not spoken for Badoura's ear; do not frown upon Badoura."

"His madness," said Lucia, with a bitter laugh. "So these vows were only madness. Well, well, that madness shall not be repeated, nor shall he have to complain of Baron de Chastelard's wickedness in stealing aught of his. Well, Badoura, what papers do you wish to obtain for your lover?"

The girl shrank from the stern glitter in the lady's eyes, blushing darkly.

"He is not my lover!" said she, simply; "he is my master, my adored sabib, who gave me a home when my proud family called me Fariab, and I love him. Lady, is it wrong to do him a service?"

"No, no; serve him certainly!" cried Lucia, haughtily; "but do not explain these matters to me. The papers, madame—tell me of them."

"Lady, you are angry; I know not why," murmured Badoura, drooping her head, while tears gushed from her eyes. "You cannot love my sabib as the servant thought."

"Love, do you say?" exclaimed Lucia, with scornful emphasis; "no, I love him not—I never loved him!" but her quivering lips grew pale even as she spoke.

"Then will you refuse the boon that Badoura came to pray for?" humbly murmured the suppliant.

"I will see that Mr. Hereward is justly dealt with," said Miss Chastelard, coldly. "If my father holds any papers of his I shall procure them from him to-morrow morning."

"Alas, lady! the baron will not give them up, for they prove that the sabib is lord of this Tower. I heard Slygreen telling my servant about it, and he said that Baron Chastelard must have murdered Hereward sabib's lawyer to gain the papers. If you do not love the sabib, lady, Badoura will not hope to win this boon."

"He lord of this Tower!" ejaculated Miss Chastelard, with a laugh. "My good madame, it is evident you have misunderstood. Yet your friend shall have his documents if I can find them. Wait here and I will search my father's secretary."

She caught up one of the tapers from her dressing-table and left the room.

As she trod the gloomy corridors where the solid masonry cast weird shadows before her feeble light her face wore a fixed and stricken look as if some bitter grief had just overwhelmed her.

She looked neither to the right hand nor to the left, but, with that reckless air which shows how completely one has lost sight of danger, she passed straight through the baron's ante-room, where L'Ombre snored securely, and reached her father's bed-chamber.

There lay the old man upon his pillows, yellow and wrinkled as a sorcerer, with a bag of gold clutched in one hand and his sword leaning against the pillow.

With that reckless look still upon her convulsed features, Lucia de Chastelard put her hands under the pillow and drew forth the baron's keys, displaying a dexterity which she could not have possessed had she not been strung almost to fury by what she had heard.

Without a second glance to see if her father were disturbed, she glided out of the room into the baron's private strong-room, where his shut-up boxes of money, his papers, and many a guilty secret were treasured.

The keys readily admitted her—she knelt before the baron's iron-bound secretary, and unlocking it began with frigid composure her search for the papers.

In a few minutes she discovered a packet of which the seals had been broken, tied with a blood-red ribbon, and labelled:

"Hereward Kentigerna."

Miss Chastelard gazed as if stunned upon this name, then burst into an incredulous and bitter laugh.

"Is this his scheme," she muttered, disdainfully, "to perorate a number of the house which we know to be extinct? I understand my father's enmity to him now—the reason of his simulated passion for me. He would have wooed me as a sister-in-law, until his plot was ripe to carry through! Oh, heartless traitor! Oh, Hereward! Hereward!"

Her wrath was checked by a gust of wild grief, for she thought of the days that had gone. With the packet in her hand, she gave herself up to heart-broken sobs.

Then her outraged anger came to her aid again—she thought of the tokens of favour she had given him—she remembered with burning shame how she had interceded with her father for him, how she had compromised herself in their last meeting in the stone gallery at midnight.

And all the time this Hindoo girl had his love!

She might have made a glorious model of Nemesis, as she stood grasping the papers with a small, nervous hand of steel, and gazing frowningly into the humiliating past.

A faint sigh near startled her, and she turned to see Badoura standing not far distant, regarding her with patient sadness.

Should she refuse the adventurer his forged documents because she was jealous of that Indian girl? By the proudest heart in Kentigerna—no!

She closed the secretary and approached Badoura with a queen-like tread.

"Here are your friend's papers," said she, between her teeth, "but you may tell him they will be just as worthless as his devotion to Lucia de Chastelard. Now, girl, you must not linger here; you are in danger."

"Badoura is no proud English lady," said the maiden, timidly; "and she cannot divulge why Lucia's brow is so stern."

"Stern? You are mistaken, madame. How did you gain entrance here?"

"Badoura needs no bolts drawn for her—she can open doors with her gems."

She flashed her jewelled hands before the lady, and, taking the papers, hid them in her bosom.

"Ah, you bribed the porter," said Lucia, coldly; "he shall be dismissed to-morrow. Mark me, girl, in future I desire to hear nothing of your friend, and shall not countenance your entrance here a second time. Come, now, I shall see you to the gate."

She rapidly conducted Badoura through her own private way of entrance into the garden, and saw her cross the court un molested.

The porter permitted her to pass, and for his complaisance received a splendid topaz ornament from the maiden's bosom.

But next morning Lucia de Chastelard quietly ordered the man away, threatening to inform the baron of his unfaithfulness.

CHAPTER XXV.

What! wouldst thou have a serpent sting thee twice?

THROUGH Badoura's tender devotion had Hereward's life been spared, despite his wounds and the long fever which fatigue, lack of food, and anxiety, had brought upon him. Now her sagacious interposition had restored to him the precious papers upon which his success depended.

It was with feelings of grateful admiration that he heard her brief account of her adventure, nor did she

suffer him to suspect for one moment how coldly she had been treated by the lady of his adoration. With the delicate pride which has its germ in every woman's heart, whether a child of nature or of consummate art, she forbore to be the one who would hint to him the jealousy of her rival.

Hereward left the seclusion in which he had been nursed back to life, and, with a band of retainers who hourly increased, he returned to Kentigerna, determined to demand his rights from the usurping baron, and to enforce his demands by the aid of the law, now that he had documentary proof of his power.

It was late when the cavalcade rode into the court of "Kentigerna's Rest," and Jeffreys welcomed his young master with the wildest emotions, in which he repeatedly reminded him:

"How mistrustful I was when I saw you first! I knew, master, I knew it was my Lord Henry's son I saw! Don't you remember the sign I gave you—the sign that our dear baron knew his own men by? And there was never a Kentigerna yet but knew that sign."

"To-morrow," said Hereward, who was in great spirits, "to-morrow a Kentigerna shall again rule the Tower!"

"Heaven speed the day!" ejaculated Jeffreys, seeing no coming obstacles any more than did the youth.

Whether he had blissful dreams of saving Lucia from the shock of her father's ruin by sheltering her in his bosom, who can tell?

There were deep but silent rejoicings throughout Kentigerna when it became known that Hereward had come again; the crushed people began to cherish hope.

That night the young man and Watt were in close consultation in the best chamber the inn could afford. Badoura had retired some hours before to her apartment, and Seyd was stretched at her door; it was not far from midnight.

Suddenly old Jeffreys appeared with gestures of much importance.

"Master," said he, "there are two persons demanding to speak to you, and, without caring to tell my suspicions to everybody, I make bold to say I believe they are women."

"Women! Who can they be?"

"They're muffled from head to foot, and won't do aught but whisper."

"Go, Watt, and reconnoitre these Sphinxes."

Slygreen slipped out, and in a minute reappeared, conducting two slight figures, in ample disguising cloaks, into the chamber.

"You wish to speak with me?" demanded Hereward, in a courteous tone, gazing fixedly at one of the black dominoes.

She, the taller of the two, made an expressive gesture towards Watt and Jeffreys and remained silent.

Hereward immediately motioned them to retire, which, much against Jeffreys's will, they did.

"Now, madame," said the youth, in a low voice, "if you will disclose to whom I am indebted for this mysterious visit, and what is its object, I shall be duly grateful."

After a moment of hesitation she whom he addressed threw back the hood of her cloak and removed her mask, exposing the icy face of "Lucia de Chastelard!"

At the same moment Cicely, her maid, retired to a remote corner of the apartment, out of ear-shot.

"Lucia!" cried the youth, bounding forward. "I thought I was not mistaken! My beloved lady, what brings you here?" and with rapture in his eyes he would have caught her hand, but she stepped back with a proud gesture that transfixed him.

Ah! why flamed her cheek, which once bent in adorable rose-flushes upon his breast? Why blazed her eye, which once wept for him? What words are these that succeed her last fond adieu in the ruins at Kentigerna Tower?

"Sir," she said, bitterly, "do not forget that you address the Baron of Kentigerna's daughter. I have not sought you to hear such folly as your words of affection."

"Heavens! Lucia! what is this?"

"Sir—sir, dare you ask? Come, this effrontery passes belief!"

"Of what do you accuse me, lady? Of loving you wildly, despite a hundred adverse fates?—of dreaming that you in your adorable condescension loved the nameless youth whose history you—"

"Silence, sir!—you insult me!"

"I insult you, lady? Oh, what delusion is this?"

"I will not pass words with you," said she, with scorn in her hazel eyes, "for my name, though flouted by you, is too honourable to be sullied by bandying words with so base a knight. Sir, I have the misfortune to be in debt to you for my life, and, feeling the debt heavier than I can bear, I hasten to repay you. My father has conceived a plan by which you will assuredly be killed unless you listen attentively to my instructions and act upon them. When



[LUCIA'S ACCUSATION.]

you go up to-morrow to the Tower to make your demand the baron will apparently abandon the contest, and permit you to enter as the lord of the Tower. He will desire you to ascend by the circular flight of stairs to the summit of the Tower, in order to tear down the banner of the Chastelards, and replace it by that of the Kentigerns; and he will take care that you go alone. The top step of that flight is constructed so that by removing a bolt it turns upon a pivot when stepped upon, and throws the person from the top of the turret down into the moat below. This is to be your fate; your followers will imagine that you lost your footing, and my father hopes to remain unsuspected of your death. I have assured myself that such is the doom which awaits you, and I have come to warn you to beware of the top step of the turret stairs."

Hereward scarce heeded her words for gazing upon her wrathful and sorrowful countenance.

To say that he was astonished by her changed aspect towards him is feeble—he was stunned.

"Great Heavens, madame!" he cried, wildly, "how have I deserved this scorn? You burden me with angelic kindnesses and at the same time accuse me of baseness—of crimes mysterious. Except that I am a son of Kentigern, and that I have sought my rights of Baron de Chastelard, I am innocent of any wrong towards you, lady."

With a cruel laugh she put that aside, and said, mockingly:

"Has not your beautiful ally reported her interview with me, that you fain such bewilderment?"

Hereward grew crimson; in an instant the cause of her anger flashed upon him and struck him dumb with dismay. In his ingenuous simplicity the youth had never dreamed of being so misjudged, and the discovery confounded him.

"Madame," he exclaimed, "Badoura has only me to befriend her—"

"Sir, have I invited an explanation?" interrupted Lucia, haughtily, for she saw the crimson of his cheek and the consternation of his manner, and she wrung her small hands beneath her cloak—'twas the dying spasm of her faith in his sincerity.

"Lucia, I implore you not to judge me so cruelly," pleaded Hereward, striving to recover himself; "for I swear to you that I have never loved woman until you taught me—"

"I see she is indeed a tender friend," mocked Miss Chastelard, "and spares your feelings admirably; she has kept silence then upon the message I sent you. Now, sir, I have endeavoured to be of use to you, as you once were to me"—there was no quivering of the tones now—"and believing, nay hoping,

that our paths may never cross again, I bid you adieu."

"Stay, Lucia, one moment. You cannot by this cruelty make me forget your noble condescensions in times past, nor convince me that your heart is adamant. By the memory of that love which I believe to have been returned by you, I beseech you to let me say one word in my defence."

"That love was madness," retorted Lucia, with a freezing lip; "and, since you were the first to discover it, see that you bear that in memory. My choice has fallen upon one who will not call his love a madness—upon Captain La Mort!"

With a gasp and an hysterical laugh she brought the name out, and instantly closed the conference by leaving the apartment.

Before Hereward could recover from the horror into which this communication had thrown him Miss Chastelard and her maid had left the inn.

Watt came in at their departure to find his master in the fiercest humour he had ever beheld him in; for Hereward owned the aristocratically imperious temper of the Kentigerns.

"Go fetch me Seyd Ally," ordered he, his cheeks flushed, and his lips trembling with agitation.

In a few minutes Seyd was bending a salaam in the doorway.

"Enter!" said Hereward, "and attend closely to what I am about to ask you!"

The Gentoo kicked off his sandals, and entered, humbly.

"I have heard," said the youth, fixing his penetrating eyes upon him, "that when you first saw Captain La Mort from the widow of the deserted house in which I was so ill you seemed to recognize him as some one whom you had before seen. Is this true?"

Seyd, looking deeply surprised, dropped his eyes on the ground.

"Who has told the sahib?" asked he.

"Watt, who is rarely deceived in his impressions. Understand, Seyd, that you are not to be blamed for any knowledge you may possess concerning this person. You may dismiss all fear."

"Honourable master, I have seen him—I have seen him in India!"

"I must hear under what circumstances," said Hereward, earnestly. "I believe him to be an infamous man. One who is dear to me is about to be sacrificed to him. I must save her, and I think, Seyd, you can help me."

"He is an infamous man, sahib," muttered the Gentoo, shivering and closing his eyes; "oh, bad—bad man! But I cannot tell you more."

"Why, my good fellow?"

"Honourable master, do not ask me—I dare not—I would sooner die a hundred deaths pressed into one horrible one!"

"Ah!" ejaculated Hereward, becoming suddenly pallid.

A fearful thought had occurred to him—he could scarcely breathe. He pondered deeply for some minutes, while the old Gentoo watched him anxiously.

"Seyd," uttered the youth, at last, "you have been the friend as well as the attendant of Badoura ever since her reverses began. You have followed her fortunes after she lost caste by mingling with Christians, and you have left your native land because of her. This fidelity to one who from a princess has become a friendless wanderer in a strange land must have cause. You know and I suspect the reason of your attachment to Badoura."

The brown cheek of the slave grew dark; his small black eyes dilated.

"Honourable sahib, of what do you suspect poor Seyd?" muttered he, piteously.

"Of being once a brother of—the Phansegars!" whispered Hereward, abruptly.

Seyd cowered as if before the coiled form of a cobra, and the dark violet shadow of fear overspread his face.

"And Badoura induced you to abandon the fiendish brotherhood and she hid your secret for you," resumed the youth, "and saved you from your companions' vengeance by taking you away with her. Seyd, was that a Phansegar who almost strangled you in the ruined house, and was he known to you?"

A convulsive shudder seized the slave, and his very teeth chattered together.

"Sahib," he whispered, huskily, "I dare not betray a brother, for Bohwanis will hear!"

"Pshaw! don't heed these womanish fears. Bohwanis is but a senseless, hideous nothing, who cannot harm you."

"But there are the hook, the cord, the fire, for him who betrays his brothers of the Good Work—oh, sahib, spare me!"

"I will protect you from secret assassination, Seyd, and what you reveal shall never be traced to you. Nay, I will require you to say nothing but merely to bow your head if my suspicion be correct. This Captain La Mort—the infamous man whom you have called so bad, the man whom you have seen in India—was he that Phansegar?"

Seyd Ally stared at him in petrified astonishment; had his life depended upon it he could not have spoken; but speech was not required of him.

He answered by a sign.

(To be continued.)



[THE TRANSFORMATION.]

BREAKING THE CHARM.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Tempting Fortune," "Scarlet Berries," &c., &c.

CHAPTER X.

My gold is gone, my money is spent,
My land now take it unto thee.
Give me thy gold, good John o' the Scales,
And thine for aye my land shall be.
Then John he did him to record draw,
And John he caste him a gods-pounee;
But for every pounee that John a-rood
The land, I wis, was well worth three.

Ballad of Linna.

Nothing could have been more neighbourly and hospitable than the behaviour of Count Montado. With all the affability of the foreigner he united the well-bred courtesy of one who was acquainted with the manners of English gentlemen. In graceful terms he apologized for not having a servant. He had, he said, but just taken and furnished the chambers, which had not long been vacated by the last tenant, who gave up a bachelor existence on getting married, but he made up for the absence of a domestic by himself attending upon his visitor, and offering him with his own hands a cigar of the finest brand and some wine of a choice vintage.

Lord Cardington acknowledged his politeness in appropriate terms, but kept looking on all sides for Milly, who he could have declared upon oath had vanished, as it were, through the door leading into the count's room. He might have been mistaken in Milly's face and figure, as the light was imperfect, yet he could not have merely fancied that he saw on the landing a woman of some sort, who very much resembled the girl he was in search of; and he was the more anxious to find her as he had ascertained that she had suddenly and unexpectedly quitted Bryanston Square after the funeral of Mrs. Mallison, and had gone where his spies, in spite of their assiduous inquiries, could not trace her. But look as he would he could discover no sign of her.

Being a man of unabashed impudence, he did not scruple to ask the count a question, in a careless sort of way, respecting the matter which occupied his mind to such an extent as to exclude everything else.

"Pardon me, my dear count," he exclaimed, throwing one leg over the other and removing his excellent Partaga cigar from his lips, while the thick smoke curled fantastically up to the ceiling. "But did I not see—ahem—a lady on your threshold?"

"Certainly not," replied the count, promptly, in

his delicate Italian voice. "I have few friends in London, and no lady of my acquaintance would venture to visit me alone in my chambers."

"Ah! no. It is contrary to our insular custom, I am aware; but I really fancied I saw a lady with whom I am myself slightly acquainted vanish through your door like a vision of light."

"It must have been a delusion. Perhaps you were up late, my lord, and the fumes of wine were not yet entirely dissipated in your imaginative brain."

"I am not subject to delusions though," answered Lord Cardington, who was only half satisfied with this reply, "and I only once saw a ghost, which, oddly enough, heralded the death of my father. I hope this may be another supernatural warning; for the next on our family list who ought to die is my uncle, the Duke of Lewes, who has promised to make me his heir."

"Is he rich?" asked Count Montado.

"Fabulously. He has paid my debts three times, and declares upon his word as a nobleman that he will not do so again, and the Jews who lend me money believe him, which at times causes me serious embarrassment."

"Ah!" said the count. "Money is a very agreeable thing. I have found its possession very valuable. My six thousand a-year, which I derive from the rental of my estates in Italy, was a fortune of magnitude in my own country, but here there is so much money, and, where everybody is rich, I find myself lost, like a minnow amongst the whales."

The count idly rattled some dice in a box.

This was music which Lord Cardington understood well and loved dearly. As the war-horse sniffs the battle afar off, so did he scent a probable game at hazard, and, thinking the count a simple-minded, inexperienced young nobleman, he did not object to trying to win from him a little of the six thousand a-year of which he had just spoken in such modest terms.

"Do you rattle the dice occasionally?" he asked.

"In Italy, yes; just to pass the time away. We gamble for a few hundreds now and then. Would you like to try your fortune with me? But I warn you, my lord, that I am very lucky. I have always been a spoilt child of fortune."

"As you please," said Lord Cardington. "The highest thrower wins a hundred pounds a throw. My limit, if I lose, is a thousand."

The count bowed, and handed the box containing the dice to his lordship, taking another one himself. Lord Cardington threw first. The numbers were low, and he was easily beaten. The amusement continued with varying success for half an hour or

more, when his lordship threw down the box in disgust, exclaiming:

"A thousand pounds I have lost to you. The deuce and all is in the luck."

"Ah! thank you," replied the count, smiling blandly, "a cheque upon your bankers will do if you have not the money with you."

"I must give you my acknowledgment," answered his lordship, biting his lips, "for I do not think I have so much at my bank. To tell you the truth, count, I am negotiating a loan at this moment with my old friend Mordecai Moss, of Burlington Street. He holds my bills for a large amount, and has a mortgage on my property at Cardington. Heigho! how foolish young men are to make ducks and drakes of their properties."

The count handed him pen, ink, and paper, and he hastily wrote out an I O U, and shortly afterwards took his departure, not in the best temper. However, he assured the count that he was extremely pleased to have made his acquaintance, and hoped that he might see him often. They parted the best friends in the world, and the count seemed to think nothing of winning a thousand pounds before dinner.

When his lordship had gone Count Montado carefully locked up the dice with which he had been playing, muttering:

"These must not lie about. Fortunately he suspected nothing, and little imagined that they had been carefully prepared with a little lead in the middle."

There was a knock at the door; the count, looking at his watch, said:

"Ah! It is the servant whose advertisement I answered," and he let him in.

He seemed to start slightly as he beheld his face, but he motioned him to enter the sitting-room, which he did, standing respectfully with his hat in his hand near the door.

"You want a place," exclaimed Count Montado. "This will be an easy one for you. I shall require you to sleep on these premises, and be in attendance at all times. Your salary will be a liberal one, but I must know something about you."

"It's my first place, sir," replied the man, "and my name is Frederick Garron. I was an assistant in a grocer's shop at Chertsey, but after master's death I had no mind for the business, and determined to go to service."

"You can obtain a character, I presume?"

"Yes, sir. Any of the tradespeople will tell you I am honest and hardworking. Ours is a sad history. I say ours because I had been brought up with the family, and hoped to become one of them some day. Master and missis, sir, had a daughter, a sweetly

pretty girl, and I loved her as madly as ever man could love a woman. Perhaps Heaven was angry because I made an idol of her, and it's wrong I know to idolize anything on earth; but if you'd seen Miss Milly you wouldn't have wondered at it. I thought she liked me before she went up to London to visit some fine relations, who turned her head, and met a Lord Cardington, who took her away to live with him."

"That's untrue," said the count, sharply.

"Eh?" ejaculated Fred Garron, regarding Count Montado curiously.

"You have been misinformed, my friend," said the count. "I happen to know something of Lord Cardington, who is my near neighbour in this house—indeed he has not long left me—and I feel certain that he would not do such a thing as you have suggested."

"That is what they said, anyhow," answered Garron; "and when her father heard it he went mad, and one night hung himself. I cut him down stark and cold, and when Miss saw him she uttered a scream—it rings in my ears now—and became frantic, so much so that we were obliged to remove her to the county asylum to prevent her doing herself some harm."

The count, who seemed to be of an exquisitely keen and sensitive disposition, turned his face on one side and wiped away a tear.

"Go on," he said, in a voice that trembled with emotion; "your narrative interests me strangely."

"I've not much more to say, sir. Dr. Wadden, master's brother-in-law, took possession of the property, shut up the shop, and discharged me. I've been wandering about since, and it's a wonder I didn't follow master's example. If ever I come across that Lord Cardington on a dark night—"

"Hush!" said the count; "utter no threats. If he has done the girl the great wrong you say he has rent assured that the vengeance of an outraged Providence will overtake him before long."

"Thank you for saying that, sir," said Fred Garron, with tears in his eyes.

"Were you so fond of this—what was her name?—Milly, I think you said? Did you like her so very much?"

"I'd have died for her, sir. If I could only find her I'd tell her to come to my arms, pure or impure. She'd always be the same Milly to me—the same, dear, innocent, laughing, pretty Milly that I ever knew her," said Fred, earnestly.

"You are an honest fellow," exclaimed the count, "and I engage you. Serve me well, and ask no questions, even if you should see anything strange happening in my chambers. Learn to hold your tongue, and be not inquisitive. You will have no cause to be dissatisfied with me; and, perhaps, when you least expect it, you may find your lost Milly, and she may not be indifferent to or unworthy of you as you seem to think."

With these words the count gave him instructions what to occupy himself with for the present, and Fred Garron, who had oddly enough come into the service of the mysterious foreigner, entered upon his novel duties as valet and confidential factotum to an Italian nobleman.

He found his place easy enough, as the count had predicted, but it was a very lonely one. For days together his master never came near the chambers. No one called upon him but Lord Cardington; he seemed to have few, if any, friends in London.

Occasionally he was startled, as Lord Cardington had been, by seeing a thickly veiled lady, dressed in black, open the door with a key, and glide mysteriously into the apartments. Never did he see the lady converse with his master, nor could he find her in any of the rooms. The count's bed-room he could not penetrate into, for that was always kept locked, and the key was in his master's pocket.

These things perplexed Garron, and at times he had a mind to relinquish his engagement and seek service elsewhere; but the count was so uniformly kind to him, his wages were so liberal, and the work so light, that he remained, though, it must be admitted, against his will.

CHAPTER XI.

Heaven keep thee from thy mother's foes,
Or turn thy heart to thee,
And when thou meetest thy mother's friend
Remember her for me. *BURNS.*

Milly did not cease to make the most strenuous exertions for the discovery of Ariadne Mallison, for she well knew that her recovery and restoration to her proper position in society were her mother's dearest wish while on earth.

Mrs. Mallison's death had cut short a career which would have been devoted entirely to the detection of her daughter's hiding-place, and Milly felt that she could only help her benefactor's fortune in trust for her child.

She offered a large reward to a private detective of

the name of Argus, whose reputation had been well established by many skillful performances, and this man promised in less than one month to bring her the information she required.

Hardly hoping that he would succeed, Milly waited day after day for his appearance, and the month had very nearly elapsed before he came. She longed anxiously for his coming with the welcome news, because she felt irresistibly attracted towards the beautiful Ariadne.

In the first place she felt deeply grieved that a young lady of her education and position in society should have become estranged from all her friends, and live no one knew how. It was like the fall of a star of the first magnitude from that lofty heaven it had for centuries adorned. One brilliant, lightning-like flash through space, and it is extinguished for ever; a world has crumbled into dust and its place shall know it no more. So it was with Ariadne. She was an outcast, and her name was a reproach to those who had formerly known her. Secondly, Milly felt grateful to her for having in such a providential manner saved her from the fate that had been hers. What can one imagine more miserable for a weak, confiding, and lovely woman than to place confidence in a man which he in a short time basely betrays? A brief dream of ineffable bliss is succeeded by a long future of such bitter sorrow as few hearts can bear. The honeymoon is brutally interrupted, the credulous bride deserted, the crushing truth is known, and the poor, wronged, mocked-at, deceived creature left without means and friends in a foreign land, to go she knows not whither, to do she knows not what.

This disgraceful ending to a rash and ill-considered passion Milly had but narrowly escaped, and only through the intervention of Ariadne.

She knew very well that hatred of Lord Cardington, rather than friendship to herself was the primary cause of Ariadne's conduct; but the obligation was none the less on that account, and she longed to be able to shake her by the hand and call her "dear."

In addition to this she owed a sacred duty to Mrs. Mallison, and detested Lord Cardington with as much heartiness as she had once loved him. In a few short months her inexperienced eyes had been opened to the iniquities of which bold, bad men are capable when a poor, defenceless woman is in the case; and, with all the venom that a woman's injured pride is capable of producing, she had resolved that sooner or later this proud and insolent nobleman, who respected neither high nor low, should own his faults, and beg her pardon on his knees.

How she kept this resolution will be seen as we progress.

Argus came at last, and his smiling face betokened success. Milly received him in her sitting-room, laying aside some needlework with which she was beguiling the tedious hours of her solitary existence. Her mind was too much perturbed to allow her to read for any length of time. Those who have gone through feverish periods of unrest will well understand this. The mind can only concentrate itself upon one subject. A book is read in a listless manner, the lines run into one another and the sense of the story is utterly lost.

"Have you succeeded?" asked Milly, quickly.

"I have, miss," answered the private detective; "but not without difficulty. The fifty pounds you promised me have been well earned. Still, with the description you gave me and the photograph, I have managed to find the lady at last. For the first week or two I went upon a wrong tack altogether, for from what you said in confidence to me I thought she was living a dissipated life. That is not so."

"I am sincerely glad to hear it," rejoined Milly, her eyes lighting up with a pleased expression.

"She is the forewoman at a milliner's at Brompton, and they speak very highly of her. They say her taste is such that since she has been there they have sold double the number of bonnets that they did before. The name of the shop where she is employed is Brunton's. She lives over the shop, and leads a very secluded life. Her only visitor is a man who the girls say is the valet of Lord Cardington, and she has been seen to give him money, so that he is supposed to be her sweetheart."

"It is from him that she gets her information respecting Lord Cardington's movements! It was from him that she knew we were going to the opera, and—"

Milly broke off abruptly, remembering that the detective did not know anything of her history, and that it was not at all necessary to enlighten farther a man who already knew quite enough about her private affairs.

Argus was about to tell her in what way he had discovered the whereabouts of Ariadne, but Milly cut him short. The fact was all she wanted; the details could not possibly be of any use to her. It was sufficient that Ariadne Mallison was living at Brunton's, the milliner, at Brompton, under the name of

Miss Field; so she paid the detective the money she had promised and he took his leave, she remaining alone with her thoughts for hours, they being of a more inspiring kind than they had been for some time before.

Knowing very little of the temper and disposition of Ariadne, she felt that she had a difficult task to perform in visiting her, and prepared herself to receive a rebuff, because she had reason to believe that she was a girl of spirit, and had some motive in living a life of seclusion and losing her identity altogether.

One thing they had in common, at all events, and that was their dislike to Lord Cardington, who had blighted their existence and turned the happy currents of their lives into a black and sinister channel.

The next day she drove to Brompton, selecting the evening as the time for calling; and she walked up and down the pavement until Brunton's was closed, judging correctly that Ariadne would be more at liberty when business was over than before.

A knock at the front door brought Ariadne down. She was on the stairs and answered the summons, as she acted upon the principle of making herself generally useful, laying all false pride on one side, and adapting herself to the circumstances in which she was placed.

Milly recognized her at a moment. There was no mistaking the tall, commanding figure, the regular, classic features, the dark, glossy hair, and the flashing eyes that she had seen in the opera box when she awoke from her dream of love.

"Am I correct in supposing that I am addressing Miss Field?" said Milly.

"I am Miss Field," was the answer.

"Can I speak to you privately?"

"If you like. Will you step into the parlour?"

Milly assented, and was conducted to a small room at the back of the shop, in which a single gas jet was burning. This was strewn with various articles of millinery, which sufficiently indicated the sort of trade that was carried on in the house.

"We have met before," said Ariadne as soon as Milly had removed her veil. "I never forget a face."

"We have, and under peculiar circumstances. I have to thank Ariadne Mallison for saving me from a fate that would have been worse than death," said Milly.

"You are right. A moral death is worse, infinitely, than a physical one," said Ariadne, with a sigh of pain. "But how did you know my name, and how did you find me out here?"

"It was your poor mother's wish that I should do so. She—"

"I have read all in the newspapers," hastily interrupted Ariadne, "and I am convinced that my mother did not commit suicide."

"You acquit me of any blame, I hope?"

"I do. I have formed a suspicion as to the author of the murder, and it will some day, perhaps, assume a more defined shape. However, the subject is a painful one to me, and we will not dwell upon it, if you please."

Milly acquiesced, and proceeded to tell her how she had first met Mrs. Mallison, and in what way she had left her all she possessed.

"You see," she concluded, "that I only hold the money in trust for you. If you like to claim it this instant I will renounce all right to it, and become a pensioner on your bounty until I can provide for myself."

"Thank you," answered Ariadne, coldly; "I will not deprive you of a shilling of the fortune. My life is not happy. How could it be so? But it glides away quietly. I have, through the villainy of Lord Cardington, forfeited my position in society, and cannot go back amongst my friends. I have but one object in life!"

"That is—"

"Revenge. When I see Cardington humbled and broken I shall be satisfied, and not till then. When that day comes I may say to you divide with me the money which my mother has left."

"You will pardon me," said Milly, "for making an observation that may seem strange to you?"

"Yes."

"I fancy that what little knowledge of the human heart that I possess has given me the key to the enigma of your life. You still love Lord Cardington!"

Ariadne looked confused.

"You love him, for you were jealous of me. You will not allow him to look at any other woman. You keep a spy upon his actions, and you are regularly informed of all that goes on. You hope to see him poor and helpless, and your plan is to come to me for money, which, of course, you are entitled to, and you will offer him your heart and your fortune, and as you lay them at his feet you will only beg for a little love in return, and ask him to repair the great wrong he has done you by making you his wife."

"Well," said Ariadne, in her distant, stony manner,

"suppose you have guessed correctly, have you any objection to such a scheme? Do you condemn it? I may be cherishing a phantom, but is not my ambition praiseworthy?"

"My dear sister, if you will allow me to call you so, for Mrs. Mallison treated me as a mother," said Milly, "I will aid you in every way in my power to accomplish your purpose."

Ariadne's stern manner seemed to melt for once. "I thank you for your kindness," she said; "but I must tell you frankly that we can never be friends. If you can help me to my ends I shall ever feel grateful to you, but I shall never like you. Never can I forgive you for being dearer to Cardington than I was. You usurped my place in his affections."

"After you had been deposed; nor did I know that he had ever loved you or that you were in existence."

"That is true; but I hate you for having nearly stood in the same position to him that I did once."

"Then you do love him in spite of the wrong he has done you?" Milly said.

"Passionately. It exemplifies the weakness of a woman, for I know full well that he hates and detests me as much as he once loved and adored me. Yet I do not despair of converting him to his old faith; but he must be poor and miserable and friendless first."

Milly felt sorry for Ariadne; she had not suspected the existence of this passion, but now that she was aware of the fact she saw that she could be of use to her by helping in the ruin of his lordship, which was not difficult to accomplish, owing to the embarrassments in which he was involved, his reckless conduct, his expensive tastes, and his extravagant behaviour on all occasions.

"If we may not be friends," she exclaimed, "I will at least labour for you at a distance; and when you least suspect it, I shall be working for you. Certainly if Lord Cardington can be induced to marry you that would place you once more in the position you ought to occupy, and by labours to that end I shall be fulfilling the dying wishes of my kind benefactress better perhaps than in any other way. Still the question arises—would you be happy as the wife of a libertine who does not care for you?"

"I would make him love me! Oh, I would lavish such a wealth of affection upon him if he were once mine, and mine alone, that my tongue cannot describe. He could not withstand my love—my passionate adoration," answered Ariadne, earnestly.

Milly shook her head. She had heard of reformed rakes making the best husbands, but she did not believe in the proverb, and feared that Ariadne had much trouble in store for her by treasuring up a passion for a man who had in a hundred different ways proved himself totally unworthy of so much feminine devotion.

"Would it not be better to root him out of your heart altogether?" she asked. "Think of what he is and what he has done."

"You may abuse him—you have a right to," responded Ariadne, angrily; "but I consider him mine as he swore to be. You have a woman's heart, and ought to understand my feelings; yet I know well that one woman can never really feel for another. Woman's war is always going on; one woman is always bitter to another when the heart is concerned. Perhaps you love him yourself."

"No," replied Milly, sadly, feeling hurt at her companion's tone; "that is over for ever. I thought I loved him once; but I was young and foolish."

"So was I young. You will not call me old?" "Far from it. You are but little older than I, and far more beautiful; but with me love has turned to hatred. I am made of different material from you, and cannot forgive the ruin of my prospects, the death of my father, the insanity of my mother, the break-up of my home, which are all owing to that man."

"I cannot see that. You judge him too hastily," answered Ariadne, always ready to make excuses for Lord Cardington. "Were you not to blame in the matter? Did you not act precipitately? Why did you not consult your parents? Why fly with him? Did you not hope to raise yourself from your humble position by marrying a lord?"

"I can see we shall not be friends," answered Milly; "yet I will work for your happiness for your mother's sake."

"I want you to do nothing of the sort. All I require is that you will not interfere in my affairs. I do not molest you!" Ariadne exclaimed, in a disagreeable manner; "and I only ask to be left alone. Now my elusion is discovered nothing remains for me but to leave London. I will not be pryed upon and have advice thrust upon me in a patronizing way against my will. I want to be alone. I want to work out my end in my own way. You ought to be satisfied as you have my mother's money."

"I have offered it to you."

"I refuse it at present; it would be of no use to me now."

"Good-bye," said Milly. "I am sorry I called upon you now. Yet, believe me, my intentions were of the best, and my visit dictated by the purest motives."

She made a slight inclination of the head as she finished speaking, and went away, letting herself out at the front door, and walking sorrowfully down the street.

Ariadne sank into a chair, and buried her face in her hands.

"I hate her," she murmured, "I hate her because he loved her and she was all but his wife. I could scarcely contain myself in her presence. What he could see in the flaxen-haired doll I cannot imagine. I hate her! oh, I hate her—and she knows it without a word from me!"

CHAPTER XII.

What is the life of man? Is it not to shift from side to side—from sorrow to sorrow—to button up one cause of vexation and unbutton another?

Tristram Shandy.

POOR Milly went home with a sorrowful heart, she had expected so much and reaped so little from her interview with Ariadne. She had hoped to make her a friend and co-operator in the work she had in hand, instead of which she found her a jealous and distrustful enemy.

It was not that Ariadne did not wish to see Lord Cardington humbled, liked Darins, from his high estate, but she loved him still, and only wished him to be humbled in order that when his pride was broken he might turn to her for that consolation and love he had formerly despised.

Milly thought to herself:

"I will make him marry her, then Mrs. Mallison will rest in her grave, and I shall have fulfilled my mission."

How she accomplished this will be seen by degrees.

It was no easy task, and she knew it, but she was full of resources, and with her to undertake anything was to bring it to a successful issue.

She walked all the way home, thinking that the exercise would calm her, nor was she mistaken, for as she reached her home she felt a serenity to which she had long been a stranger.

The dream of bliss and confidence in the future was short indeed. A man placed himself by her side, and a voice she knew well spoke to her in hated accents.

"So we have met again. Luck is certainly on my side. You disappear—I make every effort to discover you without avail—and run against you in the street in the most extraordinary manner."

Milly trembled for a moment, but soon recovered her firmness.

"Sir Elliott Bridges," she said, "I do not know why you should persecute me with the determination you have shown for some time. I have never done you any harm."

"No, my child, and I doubt whether you could if you tried," replied Sir Elliott, with a cruel smile.

"That remains to be seen. What is it you want with me now?"

"Allow me the honour of accompanying you home, and there we can talk at our ease."

"Suppose I refuse?" said Milly.

"In that case I shall place myself by your side, and not leave you until I see where you are domiciled. If you object to that you cannot prevent me from following you at a slight distance. Better make the best of circumstances, and humour me, than waste my time and your own and cause us both annoyance."

Sir Elliott twirled his moustache, and awaited her reply.

"Very well. You shall come to my humble lodgings, and we will have an understanding with one another," she replied.

"Nothing I desire more."

"Walk behind me, if you please," continued Milly. The baronet smiled, but did as she requested, and in a short time they reached her lodgings.

"Not so very humble, either," he exclaimed as he looked round at the well-furnished apartment.

"Now, sir, your business with me?" she asked, closing the door and confronting him with the boldness a woman possesses when put upon her mettle.

"Certainly," returned Sir Elliott. "Are you aware that Lord Cardington still loves you?"

"Oh," said Milly, with a contemptuous air, "you do not woo on your own account, Sir Elliott Bridges. You are merely, I presume, the paid agent of another. How much does his lordship give you?"

Sir Elliott winced under this home thrust.

"I am poor," he said, apologetically, "and, moreover, I would do anything to serve a friend."

"Even to the sacrifice of your own honour? But

suppose I were to pay you well, would you cease to persecute me?"

"In the first place I don't suppose you have the power. Cardington is not rich, and his affairs are in an embarrassed state, yet he can put his hand on money when he wants it. The Jews are very accommodat-

ing."

Milly went to a desk and took out several notes for a hundred pounds each—good Bank of England notes, the genuineness of which there was no disputing.

"So you have money. How much?" he said, gazing anxiously at the notes.

"How much do you want to leave me in peace?"

"Say two thousand pounds," and his eyes glistened at the prospect of so much money.

"I have only fifteen hundred; will that sum do?"

"Yes!"

"And you promise not to molest me if I give you this sum?" pursued Milly.

"I do!"

"Solemnly?"

"Most solemnly! I will not see you if I pass you in the street, on the word of a baronet and a gentleman; and I will forget where you live."

Milly smiled in a peculiar manner.

"Then I will not give you one halfpenny, Sir Elliott Bridges," she exclaimed; "you would not keep your word, and I can afford to defy you. Not one shilling of my money shall you have. Go to him who employs you, and tell him I defy you both."

Sir Elliott could scarcely believe the evidence of his senses. Milly had been playing with him as a cat toys with a mouse. He was furious. His weak, fishy-looking eyes dilated, and he could have sprung upon her.

"You forget that you are in my power," he cried, hoarsely.

"I forget nothing!" she replied.

"You remember, then, the evening of the murder of Mrs. Mallison?"

"Of which you know, better than any one else, that I was innocent."

"What does that matter? Suppose I tell all I know?"

"What is the alternative?" Milly asked, quietly.

"One of two things: give me that money and I let you alone, or, failing that, come to Lord Cardington, who will take you to his arms once more and place you in the position of a lady."

"Will he marry me?"

"That is rather too much to ask! You must not expect that! Look at his position and yours," answered Sir Elliott.

"I am surprised that you should dare to make such an infamous proposition to me, Sir Elliott Bridges!" exclaimed Milly, drawing herself up with dignity, "and if your friend Lord Cardington would make me his wife to-morrow I should decline the honour, as I have no wish to become allied to a villain and a scoundrel. Go! You are at liberty to do as you like!"

He cowered before her for a moment, but, collecting himself, said:

"You will give me the money then?"

"Certainly not!"

"Do you know what I can and shall do?"

"Call in the police and arrest me on a false charge, the truth of which you will endeavour to substantiate with perjury of the blackest dye!"

"Reflect!"

"Go!" said Milly.

"But the officers of justice—"

"I have no fear of them. Simply leave me; your presence is hateful to me, you have no consideration for a helpless woman, and your instincts are the reverse of gentlemanly, still as you are a friend and associate of Lord Cardington I could expect only what I have met with, as birds of a feather flock together."

"Very well, you will repent this!" said Sir Elliott, foaming with rage.

"Go!" she said, opening the door.

"In ten minutes you will be in the hands of the police."

"Go!" she said a third time.

With a sinister look Sir Elliott Bridges quitted the room, and left Milly with the impression that he had gone to destroy her. In fact, he went to the nearest police station and spoke to a constable he saw outside.

"Are you on duty?" he asked.

"No, sir! I have just come off!" answered the man, "but you will find the inspector inside!"

"Never mind, you will answer my purpose," said Sir Elliott. "I want to frighten a lady who has detained something belonging to me. Mind, I don't really want to give her in charge, but you must come to her house with me and pretend you have come to take her, you understand!"

"It's against the rules, sir!"

"I know it is. But if I give you a five-pound note

I suppose you will put your scruples in your pocket."

It was a large sum, more than the constable would earn in a month, and he could not refuse the bribe. "Very well, sir!" he said, "I'll come with you, but I hope I shan't get into any trouble; if I do you'll see me through it?"

"Of course!" replied Sir Elliott Bridges, putting the crisp five-pound note into his hand.

This silenced the scruples of the policeman altogether, and he followed his conductor to Milly's lodgings.

The landlady opened the door.

"Is Miss Haines within?" inquired Sir Elliott.

"She was a moment ago, sir! Who shall I say?" replied the landlady.

"Never mind! I will go in!" Sir Elliott replied, pushing past her and beckoning to the policeman to follow.

The landlady, thinking he was a friend, did not stay to ask any questions, and went downstairs. Being old and short-sighted, she did not see the policeman, therefore her curiosity was not excited.

Sir Elliott pushed open the sitting-room door with a sort of rude triumph peculiar to his rough mind. He looked round.

To his astonishment he could see nothing of Milly, but on the sofa was sitting a gentleman with a foreign aspect.

Rising, this person bowed politely, and said:

"Can I be of any service to you?"

"I have come to see Miss Haines," replied Sir Elliott. "You will oblige me by telling me where she is."

"Ah! indeed," replied the gentleman. "You are the friend—and he laid a stress on the word—she expected, I presume?"

"Possibly."

"All I can tell you is that she has left London for a long time. Gone to Paris, I believe."

"Did she leave that message for me?" asked Sir Elliott, dumbfounded.

"She did."

"Who are you, sir, may I ask?"

The gentleman tendered him a tiny ivory card, the edges of which were delicately gilt.

"Count Montado," exclaimed Sir Elliott as he looked at the pasteboard.

"The same, at your service," answered the count, with a polite bow and an affable smile.

"The gentleman of whom I have heard Lord Cardington speak."

"I have the honour to be his near neighbour in the Albany."

"You know Miss Haines?"

"Slightly."

"Confound it!" cried Sir Elliott Bridges. "I cannot understand this mystery."

"Do you want me, sir, any longer?" asked the constable.

"No; you can go. Stop outside for a while, I may require your services. Wait; you understand."

The policeman touched his helmet in military fashion, and went away.

Count Montado lighted a delicate cigarette with the utmost nonchalance, and waited for Sir Elliott to speak.

It seemed as if he was enjoying his confusion.

(To be continued.)

THE MYSTIC EYE OF HEATHCOTE.

CHAPTER XXX.

WE must now take a retrospective glance at the circumstances which culminated in the events narrated in the last chapter.

The *Times* had a column and a half on the demise of the young heiress of Heathcote Abbey, detailing all the circumstances of her death and burial, and commenting largely on the amiable qualities she had possessed.

Then there followed an elaborate summary of the Heathcote pedigree, and many wise surmises and suggestions in regard to the disposition to be made of the vast estates now left for the first time for centuries upon centuries without an heir-at-law.

The *Times* contained all this, and with a copy of the paper in his pocket, Father Anselm turned his face towards Italy. He did not stop at the Sacred Heart, but pushed straight on in the direction of St. Gothard; and whether he went by coach or rail, right in his steps, like a shadow, followed the Cornish seaman. He had got his unliking eyes on the black-cowled friar, and, believing him to be at the bottom of some secret, he determined to follow and watch him.

Father Anselm made a straight line for the Alpine castle, reaching it in the purple dusk of an April day. It was a desolate old building, gray and dim,

and rapidly falling into ruins. A massive iron gate was opened into the court-yard, from which a flight of stone steps, green with moss and mildew, led up to a curious kind of porch or terrace.

Father Anselm entered the iron gate, which stood ajar, and, ascending to the terrace, made his way over the mouldy flagstones till he reached the main entrance. Here he pounded lustily on the brazen knocker, and, after a good long interval, and quite a creaking of bolts and rusty hinges, the massive door opened cautiously, and a man's face peered out. At sight of the monk he threw the door wide open.

"So you're alive yet, Antonio?" quoth the friar.

"All alive, yer reverence," responded Antonio.

"And all safe?"

For answer the man chuckled, closing and locking the door, and brandishing the heavy key significantly.

Father Anselm laughed too—a wicked, exultant laugh.

"All right," he said as they threaded a narrow corridor leading towards the western wing of the building. You're a rich man for life, then, my good fellow. The job's complete, and all that remains to be done is to keep the pretty bird in her cage. I shall leave that to your care, my Antonio. Meanwhile here is a Bank of England cheque for five hundred pounds, and you shall receive the same amount every year as long as you are faithful. You understand? Now I want to look in at the bird myself."

Antonio received the cheque with a glitter of satisfaction in his greenish-black eyes, and led the way into a lighted apartment, rather cosy and comfortable, where our Sphinx-faced acquaintance of a preceding chapter was employed in setting out the evening meal.

She made a courtesy to the monk, and drew up a chintz-covered chair before the blaze that flickered in the fire-place.

"Sit ye down," she said, "and have a bite o' supper. Ye look fagged and weary wi' your tramp."

Father Anselm readily accepted her invitation, and Antonio brought out a pipe-box and a pouch of Turkish tobacco, and the two puffed and chatted quite confidentially. This Antonio and the monk were old and tried friends, and had served each other many a good turn years before; they had made a campaign in India, as master and valet, and Father Anselm had no doubts in regard to his man's fidelity.

While they were smoking and discussing their plans within the Cornish sailor who had dogged the monk's footsteps to the castle gate made his way into the court-yard with stealthy feet, then he crept up the mouldy steps and stood on the terrace, his yellow eyes glittering.

"I wonder if she's in there!" he muttered under his breath, running his brawny hands over the heavily bolted door. "That man in a priest's garb is after no good, I'm sure o' that; and I'll get at the bottom o' it, no matter what's the cost. It's a strong den, but if they've got my poor Margaret in here I'll hev her out if it costs me my life."

Father Anselm drank his coffee and munched his oaten cakes, then, drawing a small flask of brandy from under his serge, he and Antonio drank together. After which the woman lighted a tallow candle, and preceded him down to the black vaults beneath the castle.

The way was steep and dark, and foul with filth and mould, and the monk found it as much as he could do to keep step with his guide.

At last she paused before a heavily grated door, and, drawing a huge key from her pocket, inserted it in the lock.

"When shall I come for you?" she whispered as the door opened.

"In an hour," replied the monk; and, passing through the aperture, he was locked in the gloomy cell.

A faint light glimmered within, revealing a spacious, square apartment, plainly but comfortably furnished, with a little flickering fire in the farther end. Before this fire, swaying backward and forward in a low rocking-chair, sat the young prisoner. At the sound of the opening door she arose, and stood face to face with Father Anselm.

When he looked upon that white face, and met the almost unearthly beauty of those tender blue eyes, a thrill of genuine human pity stirred his heart.

"Why, my child," he began, advancing with extended hand, and for the moment oblivious of everything but the yearning love and pity within him, "why, my child, how you have changed!"

But Lady Grace, after one brief breath of surprise, waved him off with dignity. The action brought the colonel to his senses. Even in the very throes of death and despair she scorned him. His face flushed beneath his cowl.

"Sit down," he said, coolly, "and let us talk over our plans. But first of all read this."

He spread the *Times* on the table, and pointed to the obituary notice, which was heavily marked in black.

The girl resumed her seat, and, taking up the paper, ran her eyes over the heading of the article.

With the first glance her attention was riveted, and she read on, impelled by a kind of horrid fascination; and while she read all the minute details of her own death and burial her face whitened, and the paper shook and rustled in her grasp. When she had finished she looked up, her distended eyes full of unutterable agony and horror.

"Well," said the monk, "what have you to say?"

She drew a long sigh, and crossed her slender hands upon her lap. In her grave her face would never look whiter or more passionless.

"I have nothing to say," she replied, quietly. "I will submit to my fate."

"Your fate is not even yet irrevocable," continued Father Anselm, his voice unsteady from suppressed excitement; "there is one way to escape."

She made no answer, and he went on:

"Lady Grace Heathcote is dead and buried, so says rumour; but rumour rarely tells truth. I offer you once more, and for the last time, the chance to become my wife. Marry me to-morrow, and I will take you from this place, and hurry back to England, and prove the whole affair to have been a fraud. Easily enough done, you see—Lady Heathcote and Father Anselm got up a counterfeit death and burial. But Colonel Henshaw has married the true heiress, and, as his wife, she shall be restored to her legal rights."

The girl looked up in utter amazement at the man's cool villany, and, mistaking this startled gaze for a sign that she was about to relent, he again extended his hand.

"Come, my darling," he said, tenderly, "you can't tell how your stubbornness has grieved me, but you have thought better of the matter—you will be my own at last?"

He made an effort to take her hand, but she recoiled from him with a gesture of loathing.

"Colonel Henshaw," she cried, "the worst that can befall me is a thousand-fold more endurable than your presence. Do me the favour to depart at once—go back to England and take possession of my dead father's estates, if the law will allow you; but if you are a man, in consideration of the wrongs I have received at your hands, you surely will, during what little time I live, forbear to torture me by intrusions like this."

She returned to her rocking-chair, and with a muttered imprecation the colonel turned to leave the cell. But the ply in his heart stirred again, or perhaps it was his passion for the beautiful young maiden.

"Remember," he said, "this is your last chance; after to-night there will be no power on earth or in heaven strong enough to save you."

But Lady Grace, smiling serenely to herself, did not turn her head or deign to reply, and hearing the signal at the door, the colonel withdrew.

CHAPTER XXXI.

JUST here it will be as well, perhaps, to return to and follow the adventurous fortunes of good Nurse Seaton. We left her in a little oarless boat, drifting far out to sea before the angry tide beneath a threatening sky, with a glimmer of feeble stars and the sickly glare of a lurid moon.

On and on drifted the frail little shell, and poor Margaret still lay in the bottom, her white face looking up at the changing autumn sky. Great rifts of black wet scudding by, blotting out the feeble stars, until by degrees the whole heavens were clouded and the yellow moon shut in. Still poor Margaret's pitiful, questioning gaze never wandered. It seemed as if this sorely tried woman were asking of the solemn night what new and untried calamity had befallen her. But no answer was vouchsafed to her save in the distant boom of thunder and the hollow moan of the gale that were mustering strength and fury far across the sea.

At last she made an effort and arose to a sitting posture, still drifting on farther and farther into the perilous night.

Above the din of the gathering storm she could hear the booming of ship guns, indicating that not many leagues distant there were others in distress as well as herself. Presently the gale began, and the little cockle shell in which poor Margaret sat flew over the swirling waters like a bird. The rapid motion almost took away her breath. Now she shot upward on the foam-capped crest of a billow, and the next instant went down into the heaving trough of the sea. She knew that the end was near, and braced herself to meet it.

There were strange noises commingled with the roar of the storm and the booming of the guns—shouts and cries that sounded human-like. In the midst of these the end came. The gale broke forth

with redoubled fury, the sea gave one mighty throes, and the little drifting boat shot keel upwards on the peak of a mountain wave.

Margaret went down with a stunning shock, and the hissing waters closed around her. But she did not lose her senses; she was calm, and strong, and conscious through it all. But the black waves were bubbling in her ears, and choking and blinding her. She felt a yearning love for all she was leaving, and an unspoken prayer for life framed itself upon her gasping lips.

The prayer was answered, for just as she seemed sinking down into the very abyss of darkness something caught and bore her up. She felt the fresh, free air again, and dimly, like one in a dream, she heard the sound of human voices.

When she fully recovered her senses she found herself stretched upon a hammock, in what seemed to be the cabin of a vessel, for she felt the rocking motion of the sea beneath her, and clustered about her was a group of dark-faced sailors, who were chattering like so many magpies.

They were speaking in Spanish, which Margaret did not understand any more than they could comprehend English. Consequently nothing could be effected till the captain, who possessed an imperfect knowledge of English, was summoned.

To him Margaret told her story, and from him she learned that she was picked up by one of his life-boats, which was sent out to succour a brig that had struck the breakers, and furthermore that she was on board his vessel, the *Armaddo*, a Spanish cruiser, bound for the Chinese waters.

Margaret entreated him to send her back to England at once, but the Spanish captain showed his handsome teeth in a wicked smile. England indeed! He should not put into port for an age! So there was no alternative for her but to remain where she was.

And, humbly grateful for her miraculous deliverance, yet very heavy of heart withal, poor Margaret, yearning for white-hilled Britannia and her rugged Cornish home, found herself under way for the far East.

CHAPTER XXXII.

LADY GRACE HEATHCOTE was buried towards the east of March, and now it was May. The oaks in the Abbey Park were in full foliage, and the dim, old gardens were drowned in bloom and fragrance.

Lady Heathcote had been closeted all day with Troherne Vant, the Heathcote solicitor, listening with patient attention while he went through all the tedious details of her vast estate—for she was mistress of the Heathcote heritage at last.

The question had been settled to the satisfaction of all concerned. There was, as before stated, no heir-at-law, no relative, however remote. St. Denys Delmar appeared to hold the strongest claim, and he, of course, resigned all such pretensions in favour of her ladyship. For it was known to be the expressed desire of Lady Grace that her step-mother should inherit the Heathcote wealth. Indeed, according to the statement of Father Anselm, her very last words were to that effect. Accordingly, Lady Heathcote held undisputed possession, and the old solicitor, though he shook his head dubiously, discharged his duty to the letter, and uttered never a word.

And now, in the dreamy dusk of this May evening, her ladyship sat in the gold and crimson drawing-room, thinking it all over, with the fire of exultation burning in her splendid eyes. In this chamber, furnished with Oriental magnificence, her toilet marked by regal taste and splendour, Lady Heathcote sat, dreaming over her good fortune, and awaiting the coming of the man she loved, for Colonel Ludovic Hernshawe was due from London that very evening.

As the last glow of daylight faded, a carriage rolled leisurely down the broad, oak-shaded drive, and in a few minutes it had passed through the ponderous lodge gates, and the colonel, followed by his servant, was alighting at the front entrance. Lady Heathcote heard his sharp, imperative ring, and rose to her feet in a tremor of eager delight. Presently she heard his ringing, military step upon the marble stairs, and she resumed her seat, forcing herself to be calm.

In another instant the footman was at the door, and before she could draw a second breath the bronzed and bearded soldier stood before her.

His face was somewhat worn, and his eagle-gray eyes a trifle dull, but at the first glimpse of this enchanted chamber, and the queenly woman who seemed part and parcel of its richness and beauty, his whole countenance brightened. He advanced with extended hand.

"My queen, Carlotta!"

"Oh, Ludovic!" and she fell forward upon his shoulder, sobbing like a girl. "Oh, Ludovic, how I have hoped and toiled for this hour," she said, tremulously.

"Well, it has come, hasn't it?" responded the matter-of-fact colonel, seating himself luxuriously in the velvet chair she had only just vacated; "we always get what we work for, if we go about it the right way."

Lady Heathcote drew a velvet hassock to his feet, and sat down, resting her jewelled hands upon his knees. Her great black eyes were absolutely dazzling, and a fiery crimson burned hotly on her cheeks. The one redeeming trait that this woman possessed was her constancy and devotion to this man. Never in their old days, the happy, youthful days at Lislewood Heath, had she looked more lovely. But Colonel Hernshawe had forgotten those days, and the mad love of his youth was a vanished dream, he was doubtless thinking of a later love, which had left his heart bitter and disappointed as he looked down into the glowing, wistful face before him, and his eyes were stern and cold.

Lady Heathcote read his indifference, and her heart throbbed fiercely, but she kept her emotion down, and said, quietly:

"Well, Colonel Hernshawe, you already know that I am sole mistress of Heathcote Abbey?"

The colonel smiled curiously.

"Yes," he replied, "I have heard as much; but tell me all the particulars. Did you have much trouble?"

"Not a bit; the Fates worked for me, as I told you they would. I was always a favourite with the 'Weird Sisters.' The golden apple dropped into my hand, all I had to do was to hold out my palm."

"A fortunate woman truly," remarked the colonel. "Won't you order me a glass of iced champagne? I'm wretchedly tired and thirsty."

Lady Heathcote rang for a servant, and when the wine came, in its handsome, jewelled service, while the colonel sipped it with a relish of an epicure, she told him all the story, with which we are already acquainted, and he listened gravely, with that same curious, significant smile.

"And now," continued her ladyship, "there is no living claimant to the Heathcote heritage—it is, mine! You remember your parting words, don't you, Colonel Hernshawe?"

"Oh, yes," replied the colonel, with a tinge of bitterness. "I quite remember them."

"And you will make them good, Ludovic; the old, old promise that you have made and broken so many times? I am mistress of Heathcote, are you ready to make me your wife?"

He put down his glass with a force that shivered the crystal stem.

"Yes," he said, desperately, "I am ready. You may name the day and hour as soon as you please."

Something in his eye, that had a tigerish glare, made her ladyship shiver with a vague misgiving, but she made no comment. She only said, very quietly:

"I shall be discreet in all things, and pay due respect to the dead. We will travel this summer, and in October I will make you lord of Heathcote."

"And how about the hidden treasures, and that wondrous old opal?" asked the colonel as she was rising to depart.

"I haven't resigned all hope of them even yet," she replied, "though, I confess, the way looks dark. Nurse Seton must be dead, and she alone held the secret. We must be patient and trust to chance, which may give us a clue by-and-by. But never grieve for them, my colonel, for without them you will be the wealthiest man in England."

"A deuced fine woman," mused the colonel, when she had left him; "but one must hold her bit strong. I can do that. Yes, I'll take her, for I must have the Heathcote wealth; it is my last chance. And yet, if it only might have been the other!"

(To be continued.)

SILENCE.—Forbear to sport an opinion on a subject of which you are ignorant, especially in the presence of those to whom it is familiar. If it be not always in your power to speak to the purpose, it certainly is to be silent; and though thousands have remembered with pain their garrulity, few have had reason to repent their silence.

DISCOVERY OF AN ANTIQUE VASE.—Some fishermen, says the *Constitutionnel*, brought up in a sweep-net, a few days ago, near the Port Royal, a shapeless mass covered with sand and shells, which they sold for a few francs to a dealer in antiquities on the Quai Voltaire. When the purchaser had carefully removed the earthy envelope he discovered that he had in his possession an antique vase of the purest style. It is of an ovoid form, and the embossing represents a dance of satyrs and bacchantes beautifully executed. The material of which the work is composed is the Oribath bronze, the secret of which has been lost, and which in Seneca's time was already worth several times its weight in gold. The valuable object just found is supposed

to date from the occupation of Lutetia by the legions of Cæsar and Labienus.

A DARING GAME;

OR,
NEVA'S THREE LOVERS.

CHAPTER XXI.

NEVA WYNDE had retired to bed, as will be remembered, upon the marriage night of Lady Wynde and Craven Black, her thoughts all of her father and of his tragic fate in India. All day long she had thought of him with tender yearning, pity and regret, recalling to mind his goodness, nobleness, and grandeur of soul; and when night came, and she lay in her bed with the noise of revellers in the drawing-rooms and on the lawn coming faintly to her ears, she had sobbed aloud at the thought that her father had been so soon forgotten, and that his friends and tenants were now making merry over the marriage of his widow to a man unworthy to cross the threshold of Hawkhurst.

Thus sobbing and thinking, she had slept, and in her sleep had dreamed that her father still lived, and that she saw him standing at the door of a hut among the far-off Indian hills, and that she heard his voice calling: "Ootavia! Neva!" Thus dreaming, she had awakened with a cry of terror, to ask of herself if it was only a dream.

It was not strange that she had thus dreamed, since all the day and all the evening her mind had been fixed upon her father. It would have been strange if she had not dreamed of him. Her dream had had the clearness of a vision, but Neva was not romantic, and although she slept no more that night, but walked her floor with noiseless steps and wildly questioning eyes, yet she convinced herself long before the morning that she had been the victim of her excited imagination, and that her dream was "only a dream."

But was it so? There is a philosophy in dreams which not the wisest of us can fathom. Although the cause of Neva's dream can be simply and naturally explained as the result of her agitated thoughts of her father, yet might one not also think, with less of this world's wisdom, perhaps, and more of tenderness, that the girl's guardian angel had placed that picture before her in her sleep, and so made recompense, in the joy of her dream, for her day of anguish and unrest?

Be this as it may, our story has to deal with actual facts, and has now to take a startling turn, perhaps not anticipated by the reader.

It was about one o'clock of the morning when Neva awakened from her dream.

It was then about seven o'clock—there being six hours difference in time—in India.

Among the cool shadows of the glorious Himalayas are many country seats, or "bungalows," occupied at certain seasons by exhausted English merchants from Calcutta, with their families, by army officers, and by others of foreign birth, enervated or rendered sickly by the scorching heats of the sea-coast or more level regions. They find "among the hills" the fresh air, and consequent health, for which otherwise they would have to undertake, at inconvenience and expense, a voyage home to England or Holland.

These bungalows, for the most part, are cheaply built, of bamboo, with thatched roofs, and are encircled with broad and shaded verandahs, always roofed, and sometimes latticed at the sides and overgrown with vines, to form a cool and leafy arcade, which serves all the purposes of promenade, sitting-room, music-room, dining-room, and even sleeping-room, for there are usually bamboo couches scattered about, upon which the indolent resident takes his siesta at mid-day.

To one of these bungalows, a fair type of the rest, we will now direct the attention of the reader.

It stood upon an elevated plateau, with the tall mountains crested with snow in the distance. It was surrounded at the distance of a few miles by a range of hills, and between it and them lay miles of forest, which was an impenetrable jungle. Around the bungalow was a clearing of limited extent, and this was dotted with plumed palms, bamboo and banyan trees.

The dwelling, frail like all of its class, was sufficiently well built for the climate. It was constructed of bamboo, was a single storey in height, and was thatched with the broad leaves of the palm. A verandah, twelve feet wide, surrounded it. Its interior consisted of a broad hall, extending from front to rear, with two rooms opening from each side of it. The central hall, containing no staircase, was a long and wide apartment, which served as dining-room, sitting-room, and parlour, when required.

A little in the rear of this dwelling were two others, one of which served as the kitchen of the establishment, and the other as the quarters of the half-dozen native servants belonging to the place.

The bungalow which we have thus briefly described belonged to a Major Archer, H.M.A., and it was under its roof that George Wynde had breathed his last. It was from its broad verandah that Sir Harold Wynde had ridden away for a last morning ride in India, upon that fatal day on which he had encountered the tiger of the jungle, in which encounter he was said to have perished.

At about seven o'clock of the morning, then, as we have said, and about the moment when Neva awakened from her dream, Major Archer reclined lazily upon a bamboo couch in the shadow of his verandah. He was dressed in a suit of white linen, and wore a broad-brimmed straw hat, which was tipped carelessly upon the back part of his head. He was reading an English paper, received that morning at the hands of his messenger, and indolently smoking a cigar as he read.

The major was a short, stout, choleric man, with a warm heart, and a ready tongue. He had greatly loved young Captain Wynde, and still mourned his death, and he mourned also the tragic fate of Sir Harold.

"Not much news by this mail," the major muttered as he withdrew his cigar and emitted a cloud of smoke from his pursed lips. "And no hope, whatever, of our regiment being ordered back to England! We shall get gray out here in this heathenish climate, while the fancy regiments play the heroes at balls in country towns at home. The good things of life are pretty unevenly distributed anyhow."

He replaced his cigar and clapped his hands sonorously. A light-footed native, clad in loose white trousers and white turban, and having his copper-coloured waist naked, glided around an angle of the verandah, and approached him with a salaam. "Sh' rbt," said the major, sentimentally.

The servant, muttering, "Yes, sahib," glided away as he had come.

The major let fall his paper and reclined his head upon a bamboo rest, continuing to smoke. He had arisen hours before, had taken his usual morning ride to the house of a friend, his nearest neighbour, three miles distant, and had returned to breakfast with his wife and family, who were now occupied in one of the four rooms of the dwelling. The major's duties for the day were now to be suspended until sunset, the intervening hours being spent in smoking, reading, sleeping and partaking frequently of light and cooling refreshments.

"I don't see how I should get along without you, Karrah," said the major, when the servant returned. "And you know it too, you dog. I pay you big wages as it is, and now I want to know how much extra you will take, and forego your present practice of stealing. I think I'd better commute. Mrs. Archer says you are robbing us right and left. What do you say?"

The native, a slim, lithe, sinewy fellow, with oblong black eyes, full of slyness and wickedness, a mouth indicative of a cruel disposition, and with movements like a cat, grinned at the major's speech, but did not deny the charge.

He had formerly been George Wynde's servant and nurse, then Sir Harold's attendant, and was now Major Archer's most valued servant. He had made himself necessary to the officer by his knowledge of all his master's requirements, and his exact fulfilment of them; by his skill in concocting sherbets and other cooling drinks; by his apparent devotion, and in other ways. Being so highly valued, he had every opportunity, in that loosely ordered household, of robbing his employer, and he was maintaining a steady drain upon the major's purse, which that officer now purposed to abolish.

"Come, you coppery rascal," said the major, good-humouredly, "what will you take to let the sugar and tea and coffee and the rest of the things alone, except when you find them on the table?"

"Karrah no make bargain, sahib," said the native, rolling up his eyes. "Karrah do better as it is."

"No doubt: but I'm afraid, my worthy copper, that we shall have to part unless you and I can commute your stealings. Yesterday, for instance, I left five gold sovereigns in my other coat pocket, and last night when I happened to think of them and look for them they were gone. You took them—"

"No prove, sahib—no prove!" said the native, stolidly.

"I can prove that no one but you went into that room yesterday except me," declared the major, coolly. "You needn't deny the theft, even if you purpose taking that trouble. I know you took the money. You are a thief, Karrah," continued his master, placidly and indolently, "a thief, Karrah, and a scoundrel, Karrah; but your race is all tarred with the same stick, and I might as well have you as another. By the way, my fine Buddhist, if that is what you are, did you use to steal right and left from Captain Wynde?"

"Karrah honest man; Karrah no steal; but Karrah always same,"

"Always the same! Poor George! Poor fellow! No wonder he died!" muttered the major, compassionately. "It was a consumption of the lungs by disease, and a consumption of means by a scoundrel; and did you take in Sir Harold in the same way?"

The Hindoo's face darkened, and an odd gleam shone in his eyes.

"Sir Harold no 'count gen'l'man," he said, briefly. "Karrah no like him. Three days 'fore tiger eat him, Karrah look into Sir Harold's purse and take out gold, only few miserable pieces, and Karrah look into Captain Wynde's trunk and take few letters and diamond pin. Sir Harold come in sudden, see it all; he eyes fire up; he seize Karrah by waistband and kick he out doors. Karrah hate Sir Harold—hate—hate!"

The indolent officer shrank before the sudden blaze of his servant's eyes, with a sudden realisation of the possibilities of that ignorant, untamable and vicious nature.

"Why, you're a perfect demon, Karrah," exclaimed the major. "You're a firebrand—a—send! If you hated Sir Harold to such an extent, how did it happen that you continued in his service, and were even his attendant upon that last ride?"

The Hindoo smiled slowly a strange, cruel smile. "Oh," he said, softly, "Karrah go back; Karrah say sorry; no one know better. Sir Harold smile sad, say been hasty, and forgive. Karrah say he love Sir Harold. That night Karrah send messenger up country—"

He paused abruptly, as if he had said more than he intended.

"Well, what did you send a messenger up country for, you rascal?"

"To Karrah's people, many miles away, to say that Karrah not come home," declared the Hindoo, more guardedly. "Makes no difference why Karrah sent. Karrah stay with Sahib Sir Harold three days, and see him die. Then Karrah live with Sahib Major."

"I hope you don't hate me," said the major, with a shudder. "I have a fancy that your hatred would be as deadly as a cobra's. If it were not for the tiger, I might think—But, paw! And yet—I say, Karrah, did you know that there was a tiger in that part of the jungle that morning?"

"Karrah know nothing," returned the Hindoo. "Karrah good fellow. He has enemies—they happen die, that's all. Karrah no set a tiger on sahib. Karrah no friend tigers. Sahib have more sherbet?"

"No, nothing more. You may go, Karrah."

The Hindoo glided away around the angle of the verandah.

"I believe I'll have to let that fellow go," muttered the major, uneasily. "His looks and words give me a strangely unpleasant sensation. I shall take care not to offend him, or he may season my sherbet with a snake's venom. How he glared in that one unguarded moment when he said he hated Sir Harold. There was murder in his look. I declare I had a hundred little shivers down my spine. If Sir Harold had not been killed so unmistakably by a tiger, and if Doctor Graham and I had not seen the fresh tracks and the marks of the struggle, and if the tiger had not been afterwards killed, I should think—I should be sure—"

An anxious look gathered on his face, and he ended his sentence by a heavy sigh.

"Strange!" he said, presently, giving utterance to his secret thoughts; "my wife never liked this fellow, although I could see no difference between him and the rest. She insists that he is treacherous and cruel. I'll dismiss him, and tell her that I do so out of deference to her judgment. But the truth is, since I've seen the fellow's soul glaring out of his eyes, I shan't dare to sleep at night, for fear I may have offended his High Mightiness. I think it better for me that he should travel out of this."

He had just announced to himself this decision, when, raising his eyes carelessly and looking out from the cool shadows of the pleasant verandah, he beheld a horseman approaching his bungalow, riding at great speed.

"It may be Doctor Graham coming up for a month, as I invited him," thought the major, too indolent to feel more than a trivial curiosity at the sight of a coming stranger. "But the doctor's too sensible to ride like that. It's either a green Englishman, with orders from head-quarters for me, or it's some reckless native. In either case the fellow's preparing for a first-class sunstroke, or fever, or something of that nature. But that's his look-out. P've troubles enough of my own without worrying about him. It might be as well to finish my sherbet before losing my appetite under an order to return to my post. Oh, bother the army!"

He sipped his sherbet leisurely not even looking again at the horseman, who came on swiftly, urging his horse to a last burst of speed. That the horse was jaded, his jerking, convulsive mode of going plainly showed. He was wet with foam, and his head hung low, and he frequently stumbled.

The horseman urged him on with spur and whip, now and then looking behind him as if he feared pursuit.

The major did not look up until the horseman drew rein before the bungalow, and alighted at a huge stone which served as a horse-block. The stranger came slowly and falteringly towards the verandah, and then the Sybaritic major set down his empty cup and glanced at him.

The glance became a fixed gaze, full of wildness and affright.

The stranger slowly entered the shade of the verandah and there halted, his features working, his form trembling. He looked weary and travel-stained. His haggard eyes spoke to the owner of the bungalow in a wild appeal.

With the peculiar movement of an automaton, the major slowly arose to his feet, and came forward, his face white, his eyes dilating, a tremulous quiver on his lips.

"Don't you know me, major?" asked the stranger, wearily.

"Great Heaven!" cried the major, even his lips growing white. "It is not a ghost! I am not dreaming! Have the dead come to life? It is—it is—Sir Harold Wynde."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE stranger who stood upon the verandah of Major Archer's bungalow was tall and thin, with a haggard face, worn and sharp of feature, and full of deeply cut lines, such as a long-continued anguish never fails to engrave on the features. His weary eyes were deeply sunken under his brows, and were outlined with dark circles. His hair was streaked with gray, and his long ragged beard was half gray also. His face was white like death, and unutterably wan. His garments were torn, and hung about his lank body in rags, save where they were ill-patched with bits of rags and vegetable fibres.

Was Major Archer right? Could this haggard and pitiable being be Sir Harold Wynde of Hawkhurst, one of the richest baronets in England, who was supposed to have perished in the clutches of a tiger?

It seemed incredible—impossible. Yet when the heavy eyelids lifted from the thin white cheeks, and looked upon the major, it was Sir Harold's soul that looked through them. They were the keen blue eyes the major remembered so well, so capable of sternness or of tenderness, so expressive of the grand and noble soul, the pure and lofty character, which had distinguished the baronet.

Yes, the stranger was Sir Harold Wynde—alive and well!

"You know me then, major?" he said. "I am not changed, as I thought, beyond all recognition!"

He held out his hand. The major grasped it in a mixture of bewilderment and amazement, and not without a thrill of superstitious terror.

"I—I thought you were dead, Sir Harold," he stammered. "We all thought so, Graham and all. We thought you were killed by a tiger. I—I don't know what to make of this!"

Sir Harold let go the major's hand and staggered to the bamboo couch, upon which he sank wearily.

"He's not dead—but dying," muttered the major. "Bless my soul! What am I to do?"

He clasped his hands vigorously.

A moment later his Hindoo servant Karrah glided around upon the front verandah.

"Bring brandy—sherbet—anything!" gasped the major, pointing at his guest. "He's fainting, Karrah—"

Sir Harold lifted his weary head and gazed upon the Hindoo. The sight seemed to endue him with new life. He leaped to his feet, and his blue eyes blazed with an awful lightning, as he pointed one long and bony finger at the native, and cried:

"Traitor! Viper! Arrest him, major. I accuse him—"

The Hindoo stood for a second appalled, but as the last words struck his hearing he flung at the baronet a glance of deadly hatred, and then turned in silence and fled from the bungalow, making towards the jungle.

Something of the truth flashed upon the major's mind. He routed up his household in a moment, and despatched them in pursuit of the fugitive.

Aroused by the tumult, Mrs. Archer came forth from her chamber. She was a portly woman, and was dressed in a light print, and wore a cap. Her husband met her in the hall and told her what had occurred. Restraining her curiosity, she hastened to prepare food and drink for the returned baronet.

Meanwhile Sir Harold had sunk down again upon the couch. The major approached him, and said: "You look worn out, Sir Harold. Let me show you to a room, where I will attend upon you. My men will capture that scoundrel—never fear. Come with me."

The baronet arose and took the major's arm; and

was led into the central hall of the house, and into one of the four rooms the house contained. It was the room in which his son had died. The windows were closely shuttered, but admitted the air at the top. The floor was of wood and bare. A bedstead, couch, and chairs of bamboo completed the furniture.

At one side of the room were two capacious closets. One of these contained a portable bathtub, a rack of fresh white towels, and plenty of water. The other contained clothes depending from hooks.

"You'll find your own suit of clothes there, Sir Harold," said the major. "I intended to send them to England, but I am as fond of procrastination as ever. It's just a well thought now. You can take them home yourself."

Sir Harold sat down in the nearest chair.

"Home!" he whispered. "How are they—Octavia? Neva?"

"All well—or they were when I heard last."

"Tell me what you know of them." And Sir Harold's great, hungry eyes searched the major's face. "They believe me dead?"

"Certainly, Sir Harold. Everybody believes you dead. And I am dying to know how it is that you are alive. Where have you been these fifteen months? How did you escape the tiger?"

The desired explanation was delayed by the appearance at the door of Mrs. Archer, who brought a jug of warm spiced drink and a plate of food. The major took the tray, and shut his wife out, returning to his guest.

Sir Harold was nearly famished, and ate and drank like one starving. When his hunger was appeased, and a faint colour began to dawn in his face, he pushed the tray from him, and spoke in a firmer voice than he had before employed.

"I have imagined terrible things about my wife and Neva," he said. "My poor wife! I have thought of her a thousand times as dead of grief. Do you know, major, how she took the report of my death?"

"I have heard," said the major, "she nearly died of grief. For a long time she shut herself up, and was inconsolable, and when she did venture out at last it was in a funeral coach, and dressed in the deepest mourning. There are few wives who mourn as she did."

Sir Harold's lip quivered.

"My poor darling!" he muttered, inaudibly. "My precious wife! I shall come back to you as from the dead!"

"Lady Wynde is heart-broken, they say," said the major. "One of the men in our mess, a lieutenant, is from Canterbury, and hears all the Kentish gossip, and he says people were afraid that Lady Wynde would go into a decline."

"My poor wife," said Sir Harold, with a sobbing breath. "I knew how she loved me. We were all the world to each other, major. I must be careful how she hears the news that I am living. The sudden shock may kill her. Have you news of my daughter also?"

"She was still at school when I last heard of her," answered the major. "There is no more news of your home, Sir Harold. The family are mourning for you and you will bring back their lost happiness. You ought to have seen your obituaries in the London papers. Some of them were a yard long, and I'd be willing to die to-day if I could only read such notices about myself. That sounds a little Siberian, but it's true. And your tenantry put on mourning, and they had funeral sermons and so on. By all the rules you ought to have been dead, and, by the Lord Harry, I can't understand why you are not."

Sir Harold smiled wanly.

"Let me explain why I am not," he said. "You remember that I was taking my last ride in India, and was about to start for Calcutta, to embark for England, when I disappeared? Some three days before that I had a quarrel, if I might call it so, with the Hindoo Karrah."

"I know it. He told me about it for the first time this morning."

"You understand then that I had incurred his enmity by kicking him out of this house? I found him stealing the effects of my dead son. He had also stolen from me. The letters he was stealing he was acute enough to know were precious to me, and there was George's diary, for which I would not have taken any amount of money. The scoundrel meant to get away with these, and then sell them to me at his own terms. I took back my property, and punished him as he deserved. I have now reason to believe he went away that night to his friends among the hills—"

"He did. He told me he did. But what did he go for?" cried the major, excitedly.

"You can soon guess. The next morning Karrah came back, professing repentance," said Sir Harold. "I reproached myself for having been too harsh upon the poor untaught heathen, and took him back. He accompanied me upon that last ride, and was so humble, so deprecating, so gentle, that I even felt

kindly towards him. We rode out into the jungle. I was in advance, riding slowly, and thinking of home, when suddenly a monstrous tiger leaped out of a thicket and fastened his claws in the neck of my horse. I fought the monster desperately, for he had pinned my leg to the side of my horse, and I could not escape from him. We had a frightful struggle, and I must have succumbed but for Karrah, who shot at the tiger, wounding him I think, in the shoulder, and frightening him into retreat."

"So you escaped when we all thought you killed?"

"My horse was dying," said the baronet, "and I was wounded and bleeding. I thought I was dying. I fell from my saddle to the ground, groaning with pain. Karrah came up, and bent over me, with a fiendish smile, and moistened my lips with brandy from a flask he carried. Then, muttering words in his own language which I could not understand, he carried me to his own horse, mounted, with me in his arms, and rode off in the direction in which we had been going, and away from your bungalow."

"The scoundrel! What was that for?"

"After a half-hour's ride we came to a hollow, where three natives were camped. Karrah halted, and addressed them. They gathered around us, and then Karrah said to me, in English, that he hated me, and that he would not kill me, but want me to suffer, and that these men were his brothers, who lived a score of miles away up among the mountains. I was to be their slave. He transferred me to their care, disregarding my pleas and offered bribes, and rode away on his return to you. I was carried on horseback, securely bound, a score of miles to the north and westward. How I suffered on that horrible journey, wounded as I was, I can never tell you. A dozen times I thought myself dying."

"It is a wonder you did not die!"

"It is," said Sir Harold. "We went through savage jungles, and forced mountain torrents. We went up hill and down, and more than once leaped precipices. I was in a dead faint when we reached the home of the three Hindoos; but afterwards I found how wild and secluded the spot was, and that there were no neighbours for miles around. Their cabin was niched in a cleft in a mountain, and hidden from the eye of any but the closest searcher. Had you searched for me you would never have found me. It was in a rear hut, small and dark, with a mud floor, and windowless walls, that I have been a prisoner for fifteen months, major. My enemies, for the most part, left me to myself, and I have dragged out my weary captivity with futile plans of escape. Ah, I have known more than the bitterness of death!"

"If we had only known it we'd have spared all India for you, Sir Harold," said the major, hotly. "We'd have strung up every native until we got the right ones. But that episode of the tiger—for it seems that the tiger was only an episode, coming into the affair by accident, but greatly assisting Karrah's foul treachery—threw us off the scent, and made us think you dead. Why did we not suspect the truth?"

"How could you? Don't reproach yourself, major. My chiefest sufferings during these horrible fifteen months have been on account of my wife and my daughter. To feel myself helpless, a slave to those Hindoo pariahs, bound continually, and in chains, while Octavia and Neva were weeping for me, and crying out in their anguish, and perhaps needing me—ah, that was almost too hard to bear! Now and then Karrah came to taunt me in my prison, and to tell me how he hated me, and how sweet was his revenge. He told me that you had heard through a friend that my poor wife was dying of her grief. After that I tried, with increased ingenuity, to find some way of escape."

"Last night the three Hindoos went away—upon a marauding expedition, I think. After they had gone one of the women brought me my usual evening meal of boiled rice. I pleaded to her to release me, but she laughed at me. She went out, leaving the door open, intending to return soon for the dish. The sight of the sky and of the green earth without nerved me to desperation. I was confined by a belt around my waist, to which an iron chain was attached, the other end of the chain being secured to a ring in the wall. I had wrenched my belt and the chain a thousand times, but last night, when I pulled at it with the strength of a madman, it gave way. I fell to the floor—unfettered!"

"You bounded up like an India-rubber ball, I dare swear!" cried the major, wiping his eyes sympathetically.

"I leaped up, and darted out of the door. There was a horse tethered near the hut. I bounded on his back and sped away, as the women came hurrying out in wild pursuit. I knew the general direction in which your bungalow lay. I rode all night, going out of my road, but being set straight again by some kindly Hindoos; and here I am, weary, worn, but oh, how thankful and blest!"

The baronet bowed his head on his hands, and his tears of joy fell thickly.

"You're safe now, Sir Harold," cried the major. "I hear a hubbub outside. My fellows have got back, with Karrah, no doubt. I want to superintend the skinning him, and while I am gone you can refresh yourself with a bath, and put on a suit of Christian garments. My wife is dying to see you. I hear her pacing the hall like a caged leopardess. Get ready, and I'll come back to you as soon as you have had a little sleep. You're among friends, my dear Sir Harold; and, by Jove, I'm glad to see you again!"

He pressed Sir Harold's hand, catching his breath with a peculiar sobbing, and hurried out.

His servants had returned, but Karrah had escaped.

The major indulged in some peculiar profanity, as he listened to this report, and then withdrew to his wife's cool room, and told her Sir Harold's story.

The baronet meanwhile took a bath and went to bed. He slept four hours, awakening after noon. He shaved and trimmed his beard, dressed himself in the suit of clothes he had formerly worn, and which were now much too large for him, and came forth into the central hall of the dwelling. Major Archer was lounging here, and came forward hastily with hands outstretched, and with a beaming face.

"You look more like yourself, Sir Harold," he exclaimed. "Mrs. Archer is out on the verandah, and is full of impatience to see you."

He linked his arm in the baronet's, and conducted him out to the verandah, presenting him to Mrs. Archer, who greeted him with a certain awe and kindness, as one would welcome a hero.

"The little Archers were playing about under the charge of an ayah, and they also came forward timidly to welcome their father's guest."

Tiffin—the India luncheon—was served on the verandah, and after it was over, and the young people had dispersed, Sir Harold said to his host: "When does the next steamer leave for England?"

"Three days hence. You will have time to catch the mail if you write to-day," said Major Archer.

"Write! Why, I shall go in her, major."

"Impossible, Sir Harold. You are not fit for the voyage," said Mrs. Archer.

"I must go," persisted the baronet, in a tone no one could dispute. "Think of my wife—of my daughter. Every day that keeps me from them seems an eternity. Major, I was robbed by Karrah of every penny I possessed. Plunder was a part of his motive, as well as desire for revenge. I shall have to draw upon you for a sufficient sum for my expenses."

"It's fortunate, and quite an unprecedented thing with me, that I have a couple of hundred pounds in bank in Calcutta," said the major. "I wish it were a thousand, but you're quite welcome to it, Sir Harold—a thousand times welcome. I appreciate your impatience to be on your way home. If it were I, and your wife were my Molly, I'd travel day and night—but there, I've said enough. I'll go to Calcutta with you, and see you off in the 'Mongolian.' I wish I could do more for you."

"You can, major. You can keep silence concerning my reappearance," declared Sir Harold, thoughtfully. "My wife is reported to be dying of grief. If she hears too abruptly that I still live, the shock may destroy her. Major, I am going home under a name not my own, that the story of my adventures may not be bruited about before she sees me. I will not reveal myself to any one in Calcutta, nor to any one in England before reaching home. I will go quietly and unknown to Hawkhurst, and reveal myself with all care and caution to Neva, who will break the news to my wife."

"Sir Harold is right," said Mrs. Archer. "Lady Wynde and Miss Wynde should not first hear the news by telegraph, or letter, or through the newspapers. Their impatience, anxiety, and suspense, after hearing that Sir Harold still lives, and before they can see him, will be terrible. The shock, as Sir Harold suggests, might almost be fatal to Lady Wynde."

"My wife is always right," said the burly major, with a glance of admiration at his spouse. "Sir Harold, you cannot do better than to follow your instincts and my Molly's counsels. It is settled then that you return to England under an assumed name, and see your own family before you proclaim your adventures to the world. What name shall you adopt as a 'name of voyage,' to translate from the French?"

"I will call myself Harold Hunlow," said the baronet. "Hunlow was my mother's name. I am rested, major, and if you can give me a mount we'll be off at sunset on our way to Calcutta."

It was thus agreed. That very evening Sir Harold Wynde and Major Archer set out for Calcutta on horseback, arriving in time to secure passage in the 'Mongolian.' And on the third day after leaving Major Archer's bungalow Sir Harold Wynde was at sea, and on his way to England.

Ah, what a reception awaited him!

(To be continued.)



[SOLD.]

THE CORAL CHAIN.

Why didn't Clara Lindsey marry? Everybody in and around "Albion House" was vainly trying to solve that question. She was young, beautiful, rich, and sweet-tempered, and had lovers by the score. Ambitious mamma's scolded, fretted, and worried. Doughty as well as gouty papas were somewhat pleased that somebody had been found who would temporarily check the match-making propensities of their idle wives. Maidens, from the young aristocracy to the painted, powdered, lay figure of thirty who had served in many drawing-room campaigns, were jealous and envious, and heartily wished "that coquette" somewhere else, for "the men, like idiots, were crazy over her purple black hair and Chinese eyes." The season would soon close, and the thought of returning to metropolitan life without a victim—begrudging a husband—was a little worse than the idea of remaining in the country all the winter to watch the weather.

"I say, Lawrence, do you suppose there is a man on earth whom Clara Lindsey would marry?" Leslie Herndon tipped his chair back against a pillar and knocked the ashes from his cigar with a great deal of deliberation, as if he was much interested in the expected answer.

"She won't marry either you or me, Leslie, for I asked her yesterday, and you—Well, you haven't recovered from your refusal, for your 'wood' has been out these five minutes!" and he laughed provokingly.

"Oh, pshaw!" muttered Herndon, confusedly, and, hastily rising, entered the house.

"That's it, the way they all do," mused West, philosophically. "He's the third one this week, and it's only Thursday. The girl is no coquette either, not a bit of it. Confound it, I'd walk from here to Land's End barefooted to know why she is so determined upon single misery! Yet she can't live alone

—she with her warm, sympathetic heart and genial presence. I wish—"

The sentence ended in a prolonged whistle, and he too left the balcony and walked down the lawn.

"I say, West, a word with you!" suddenly came upon his ear and arrested his steps.

Another male form raised itself from beneath a tree, and beckoned the young man to approach; and there was a certain mysterious significance in the motion.

"Well, Kendall, what are you digging up now?" queried West, seeing that his friend had been indulging in the boyish pastime of "stick-knife."

"Sit down, it's cool here," muttered Frank Kendall, irrelevantly.

West complied, and gazed upon his companion with comical compassion.

"Do you know what Clara Lindsey wears on her neck?" said Kendall, suddenly, and with intense earnestness.

West broke forth in a loud laugh and replied: "Egad! I should think it was an adder by the way you ask!"

Kendall bit his lip with vexation and drove his penknife into the earth with vindictive force. A moment of silence followed, then West resumed, perplexedly:

"A—a collar, I believe—a narrow white one."

"Yes, and, beneath it, a coral chain with a picture of her lover attached," said Kendall, quietly.

West's face became very long, his mouth opened mechanically, his eyes rolled upward, then he tried to laugh, but the effort ended in a mortifying failure. "I thought I could interest you," continued Kendall, enjoying his companion's discomfiture. "And I know the fact would plague you just as much as it has me. You have lived since yesterday on the hope of a second proposal, but it's all over with you, West, as it is with Herndon and me."

"Ah!" said West, recovering his composure.

"You are a very sharp young fellow, Kendall. But did you ever see this picture at the end of this coral chain?"

"No," he answered, lugubriously.

"Then how do you know it is there?"

"Nettie Haskell told me; she has seen it."

"Bah!" ejaculated West, shrugging his shoulders.

"Miss Haskell imposed upon your credulity. You had better give up the law and go into a baker's shop."

"I'll bet you a supper for ten that she told me the truth," answered Kendall, somewhat nettled at his friend's words.

"Taken! How shall we decide the question?"

"Ask Clara herself."

"But you don't dare to do it."

"Nor you. We must draw lots to see who shall brave those dark eyes. By Jove! it won't be a pleasant task, but one of us must do it."

"And the other must look on. Will you agree to that?"

"Yes," said Kendall, and taking a copper from his pocket he flung it high in the air.

West called "head" and won.

The unpleasant duty fell upon Kendall, and he resolved to execute it immediately, so they retraced their steps to the hotel. Miss Lindsey was in her own apartments, and thither the young men proceeded.

As they entered she arose, smiled in her sweet, brilliant way, and bade them be seated. Kendall, usually nerveless, was now quite embarrassed, and awkwardly dropped his hat. West, not seeing it, for his eyes were upon Clara, stepped upon the crown, and Kendall, in endeavouring to make his friend move, struck his knee against a chair with such force as to draw from him an audible sigh.

West, now conscious of the ridiculous situation, laughed aloud, and Clara, unable to wholly control her features, smiled in return. Kendall's face was a bright red, but changed to a purple when he stooped down and picked up his hat, which was marred and dented in several places.

An awkward silence followed. West nudged Kendall, and the latter looked as if he would like to eat three or four men about the size of West, while Clara struggled to keep her lips together.

"It's a nice day, Miss Lindsey?" said Kendall, blushing.

"Don't be foolish, old fellow," whispered West, turning his head towards the window.

Kendall coughed, and vainly endeavoured to make a commencement.

West saw that his friend was confusion's plaything, and, to relieve Clara as well as himself, he said:

"We have come upon a very singular errand. Miss Lindsey, but I trust the knowledge you have of our characters and positions will gain our pardon. Will you allow me to look at the coral chain which you wear?"

"Certainly," said Clara, laughing, "and I should have said yes just the same if your speech had not been half so long. Here it is—not the speech—but the chain."

She had taken it from her neck while speaking, and now held it towards him, her lustrous orbs shining regally.

West bowed as he received it, and at the same instant Kendall saw that there was no locket attached, and that, as far as he could judge, there had never been a clasp for one. But he was determined to be sure.

"Ahem! You will excuse me, Miss Lindsey," he said, somewhat hesitatingly, "but have you lost a locket from this chain?"

"Have you found one?" queried Clara, quietly.

"Answer, quick," whispered West, bending his head forward.

"No, but my friend has," rejoined Kendall, with wonderful composure.

"Mr. West will let me examine it, I am sure," said Clara, arching her pretty brows.

For an instant West knew not which way to look or what to do; then, remembering that he had in his inside vest-pocket a locket which a friend had given him years before, he drew it forth, and smilingly said:

"With pleasure. Is it yours, Miss Lindsey?"

Clara looked upon it, and her eyes dilated with gratification, and every feature revealed a deep and strange interest. She played with it for a moment as if undecided whether to return it, then said:

"You have rendered me a great service, Mr. West. I hope I shall be able to repay your kindness."

"Oh, it's nothing—positively nothing," mumbled West, thinking "Well, that's cool. She keeps my locket as if it was an old friend instead of a stranger. But what can I do? Implicitly I have spoken falsely, and now I must pay for it."

He arose, bowed himself out, and his friend followed. When once more in the open air the two

looked at each other wonderingly, perplexedly, and somewhat sheepishly.

"Who is to pay for that supper?" said Kendall, at length.

"We must toss for it," replied West; "and I must whistle for my pocket. By Jove! it's the best joke I ever knew. I hope it won't get about."

"Um! so do I. But did you notice how eagerly she looked at that locket? By the way, whose picture was it?"

"A friend of mine, whom I have not seen for fourteen years. It was taken when he was twelve years old, and could have no earthly interest for Clara; she assumed it all to mislead us. She knew what we came for, and she resolved to punish us. She did it, too, and so gracefully that it cuts all the more deeply. It is impossible to outwit that girl."

A week passed away, and Mr. West saw Clara only once, then she said nothing of the locket. He was resigned to his loss, but not to his defeat. He thought at times that his penetration had overleaped itself, that she might have lost a similar article, and that she might have known the face during childhood.

This last conjecture furnished ground for jealousy. As long as he had good reason to believe that her heart was whole he could hope that some time it might be his, but if it had throbbled only once for another then he was miserable. For his rivals, Kendall and Herndon, he cared nothing; he was sure that Clara preferred him to either of them. His conceit, you see, was equal to his blind faith.

One day he received a note from Clara, inviting him to a picnic. It contained but a few simple words; still, each one was to him a treasure and more potent than volumes would have been from any other on earth. Perhaps she had regretted her hasty rejection of him, and now wished to give him, as delicately as possible, a little encouragement. The idea soothed his heart and tickled his vanity, and West nourished the fancy until it became to him a fact. He was very sanguine and unusually cheerful when he stepped into the carriage which was to convey him within a short distance of the grove. And when he arrived there, and received a cordial welcome from Clara, he was overflowing with delight. It is singular how little love it takes to make a naturally capable man foolish.

"You are very kind, Miss Lindsey," he said, coming to her side, and gazing tenderly upon her; "I never dreamt that you would ask me to join your little party, but since you have you won't send me away again, I'm sure."

"Why, Mr. West, what afflicts you? You do not usually talk in this insipid way."

"Ah!" muttered West, regaining a portion of his wandering senses. "I suppose, to be candid, that your letter pleased me too much," and he laughed lightly.

"I don't know what you mean," replied Clara, almost contemptuously. "I have sent you no letter."

"It's one of Herndon's jokes," thought West, but to assure Clara that he had acted in all innocence he took the note from his pocket and showed it to her. She glanced at it carelessly, laughed in her quiet, provoking way, then told him that he had been victimized, that he was altogether too credulous. As she concluded West heard a low laugh, and, quickly turning, saw two male forms disappear among the trees.

He knew well enough who they were, and feeling that if he met them in his present condition a quarrel would be the inevitable result, he took an opposite course, and walked rapidly for ten minutes. Then he threw himself upon the ground, and lit a cigar. This was burned out, and another half consumed ere the violence of his rage subsided.

He felt that he was a butt for his companions, and an object of contempt to the woman he loved, and while he was declaiming to the trees—always good listeners—and telling them what unmitigated idiots men were, and what thorough-bred cheats women were, Leslie Herndon and Frank Kendall appeared before him.

"What do you want?" snarled West, raising himself on his elbow.

"Misery likes company," said Kendall, ruefully, and displayed a letter—the exact counterpart of that which West had received.

He brightened up a little as he beheld it, and when Herndon exhibited his West laughed and felt much better. They had both spoken to Clara before West came, and received a disdainful laugh in reply, and thus, when they saw his discomfiture, it acted as a balm upon their wounded feelings, and now they came to give him the reactionary benefit of it. Soon they all became very amiable and merry, and as Kendall had a basket of provisions with him, they resolved to leave the main party, and have a picnic of their own. At the suggestion of Herndon, they moved farther into the wood, and took up their position in a

little hollow, surrounded on all sides by a thick growth of hazel.

They had eaten their dinner, and were stretched at full length, enjoying their cigars, when West suddenly raised himself and shook his finger, as if to enjoin silence. His companions accepted the mute command, and remained very still. Presently they heard Clara Lindsey's voice, accompanied by that of a stranger. The young men looked at each other, then listened with deep interest.

"This is the third time you have come," said Clara, meditatively. "Surely, if Mr. Brighton loves me as you say he does, he can come and plead his own cause."

"But he is not able," replied a deep, manly voice. "He will come as soon as circumstances will let him. I know how strange, ay, foolish it seems for me to tell you that a man who never saw you, and whom you never saw, loves you, respects you, and wishes to make you his wife. I blame myself at times for being an agent, for bringing his letters to you, for extolling his virtues, but I think a good deal of him, and that, poor as it is, must be my excuse."

"Do you expect me to love him from your description alone?" queried Clara, roughly.

"No," he answered, in a matter-of-fact way. "I often tell him that you will get tired of his name before you see him, but he repeats the old story, and begs me to do my best."

"And you always do?" said Clara, coquettishly.

"Yes, I discharge my duty, awkward as it is, to the satisfaction of my own conscience," he rejoined, in that even, earnest manner of his.

Clara was silent. Although she had seen him but three times she really liked this young man who pleaded with her to listen to the suit of another, and never looked at her as other men did, and never said a soft word or smiled for effect.

"Suppose I should go and see Mr. Brighton?" said Clara, just to discover what the reply would be.

"Then he would think you bold."

"And of course would cease persecuting me. I'll do it to achieve that result."

"You are wrong. He would love you the same, and would wish to win you, that he might develop your modesty."

"Cutting, wasn't it?" whispered West to his friends.

Clara laughed good-naturedly, and answered:

"But he wouldn't know my purpose, unless you should tell him. I shouldn't speak to him you know. Your gallantry would not allow you to betray me, would it?"

"I never sacrifice truth or duty to a superficial accomplishment," he responded, gravely.

"Then I suppose you will tell him all I have said?" replied Clara, pointing.

"Every word."

She looked into his face and smiled, but he paid no attention to it, neither did a feature relax. A few more words passed between them and the young man raised his hat and moved away. For a few moments the girl remained motionless, gazing reflectively upon the earth. There was something about this stranger that excited her admiration and commanded her respect. For his employer, Mr. Brighton, she felt a pitiful contempt.

"Oh, Clara, I'm glad I've found you alone. I've been looking everywhere for you. How came you away out here? Oh, dear, I'm so tired."

"Keep still an instant then."

"Oh, don't speak till I tell you something. I wrote the letters to those three great ninnies, and they have gone away angry, and I'm glad of it. But it was fun to see them come to you and bow, and smirk, and smile, I almost choked myself laughing."

"It's a pity you hadn't," growled the three edified listeners in chorus.

"And yet, Nettie Haskell, you love one of those great ninnies," said Clara, half reprovingly.

"Loved, you mean. I don't care a farthing for Frank Kendall now, and I wouldn't marry him if he'd give me a gold carriage with pearl top and diamond wheels." And to prove the truth of her words this brown-haired, hazel-eyed little sylph brushed a tear from her cheek and sighed hysterically.

Clara saw that to continue the subject would cause her impulsive friend pain, so she began humming a merry air, and retraced her steps towards the grove. Nettie stood still for a moment, then followed, laughing—her moods were like an April day.

When it was safe to speak loudly again the three young men all spoke at once, and advised each other to "shut up and give me a chance." A second attempt succeeded much better, and West and Herndon congratulated Kendall on his flattering prospects with Miss Haskell.

He growled audibly in reply, and characterized the whole affair as another sell, but could not help thinking:

"Nettie is good, Nettie is pretty; I liked her before I saw Clara, and as I can't have Clara I'll return to Nettie."

Which of course was a great condescension on his part.

Three days later Clara was favoured with another call from Mr. Brighton's agent. As he entered the room Clara arose and advanced with much graciousness to meet him, while Mr. Lindsey, her father, stood back near the sofa, smiling quietly.

"Another of those horrid letters?" queried Clara, frowning.

"I will return with it if you do not wish to accept it," remarked the young man, drawing his hand back.

"No; he may accuse you of unfeelingness in office, and for your sake I'll take it," replied Clara, somewhat condescendingly, and hastily added: "Will you give me your name that I may introduce you to my father?"

"My name is Brighton. I am a near relative of Mr. Brighton."

"His son perhaps," said Clara, after the introduction was over. "Don't you think I'd make a delightful step-mother?"

"I can hope you would," was his sincere reply.

Mr. Lindsey now excused himself and left the room. For a few moments the young people were silent, then Clara asked Mr. Brighton if he considered it wicked to joke.

"No," he replied.

"Then why are you always so grave?"

"The spirit of merriment has been stamped out of me by grief and blood," was his answer.

This was his strange reply, and Clara became interested, and asked him if he would not tell her something of his life.

He was surprised that she should care to know aught of him, but he complied; and among other incidents related the following:

"When I was a mere youth my parents were very wealthy, and every wish of my heart was gratified. I have since looked back upon those days and thought of my mother and sisters—now dead—and wished that my life had ended then. Do not consider this weak despair—it was earnest desire. I loved my mother and sisters, and there was one other whom I loved. Don't smile now, for my love was very deep for a child as I was then, else I should have forgotten it ere this. I was riding out one morning when I saw a little girl sitting on the kerbstone weeping bitterly. It was no unusual sight, but I was impressed by her appearance, and thought that she was too good to be in rags. Well, to make a long story short, I stopped my pony, dismounted, and spoke with the child. She was poor—I gave her all my pocket-money, then put a chain around her neck that I had bought for one of my sisters the day before. The girl was very grateful—indeed, I can remember just her motion when she brushed the last tear from her eye and smiled. I shall never forget it. I have little romance about me, but I believe if I should see her I should ask her to be a poor man's wife—a hard fate perhaps, but I should be selfish enough to forget that."

"What kind of a chain was it?" queried Clara, carelessly.

"Coral, with silver hand-clasps. I bought it more for a curiosity than anything else," he answered.

"I have a similar one on my neck," she said, as if to prop up the conversation.

He requested her to allow him to examine it. She got it partially off, then remembered the locket and hesitated, but only for an instant. He took it, and an expression of surprise, mingled with doubt, gradually overspread his features; and he asked permission to open the locket. It was granted. He touched the spring, saw his own face as it appeared at twelve years of age, and started from his chair with an exclamation of astonishment.

"Do you know whom this picture represents?" he asked, excitedly.

"The boy who gave me that chain—it is he," answered Clara, her face tingling with crimson.

He gazed upon her yearningly, took a step forward, then, pausing, pressed his hands to his head. For a moment he stood silent, then, advancing, he took her hands in his and earnestly said:

"Clara Lindsey, I am a poor man, but I ask you to be my wife."

"Arthur Brighton, I would say yes if you were ten times as poor as you are. I have waited for you, knowing that you would come."

The words were uttered disconnectedly, and with hesitation, but they were true and artless.

"My darling! You remembered my name?"

"Yes; no prosperity could drive that from my mind. As you have imagined I am only Mr. Lindsey's daughter by adoption, but he has given me a fortune, and you shan't be poor, Arthur." Then she added, roughly: "But what will your name-sake say?"

"Forgive me, Clara, I have deceived you, but I knew not that you were the friend of my ride. You are not displeased?"

It is fair to assume that she was not, for two months later they were married.

At the same time Frank Kendall prevailed upon Nettie to accept his name. The same evening Mr. West received his locket with the remark:

"Many thanks. It has done noble service, but I have no farther use for it." W. G.

NAMING OUR CHILDREN.

OUR present question is "What are we to call baby?" Sometimes the mother, in her hour of joy and thankfulness, as a mark of affection for her husband, says "We'll leave it with father." Sometimes the father declines the privilege. In other households it is the custom for the father to name the boys, and for the mother to name the girls. In others the elder children are consulted, or the sponsors, or some rich relations, or some valued friend. So that it often happens that much time is spent, and many opinions are advanced, and many suggestions offered, before the decision is made. And when the decision is come to it is not always the best.

People's tastes differ widely on the matter of names. What is very sweet and suitable to old folks may be very unbecoming and harsh to the juveniles. "Mary" is music itself to many persons; it is plain and common to others. "Mary" is a perfect name. It is never out of place, or out of season, either in the Royal palace or in the labourer's cot. It becomes a servant as much as a queen. Parents can never be wrong in calling one of their girls "Mary." She will never be ashamed of it. Only, if your bright little girl is to be baptized "Mary," do not add "Ann" to it. It stands best alone, as the queen of names, requiring no additional grace.

Then, if the consultation be concerning a boy, is there no name for him equal in fitness and excellence to Mary? I think there is. But it is not Jonathan, or Isaac, or Timothy, or Nicodemus. In their places these names are good. In the Bible they sound neither strange nor inappropriate. Take them out of the Bible, and immediately they seem to lose their fitness. One should be sparing in using Scripture names. Some are never undesirable, but many are. We never mention some, in connection with living persons but with a smile or a shudder.

Why it is so we cannot easily explain. There is no particular reason for it, perhaps, but we cannot become reconciled to the indiscriminate use of Moses, Abraham, Solomon, Ezekiel, and Titus. When one sees in the street a drunken, blaspheming man, bearing the name of Aaron, or a ragged, dirty urchin just come out of jail called Jacob or Paul, we cannot fail to notice an incongruity and a combination which ought never to have existed. Let parents, then, exercise a little discretion in adopting Biblical names. Your infants, when brought to the font, are entirely in your hands; they are unconscious of what is passing. Do not give them names of which they may live to be ashamed. Do not put a stigma upon them which they can never throw off. Remember that their future may be in a measure affected by their very names. They may hinder their advance, or they may promote their welfare.

We have heard of a family in which almost every member had a Bible name. The family is chiefly remarkable for this fact. Whenever a fresh baby saw the light the father, who took the business of naming entirely into his own hands, invariably opened the family Bible, and searched its pages until he had hit upon a name to his taste. The result of these frequent studies was that the sons were called Lot, Ezra, Jehoshaphat, Amos, Lazarus, and Titus. They are to be pitied, poor fellows. As for Lazarus (who is not a beggar covered with sores), he would give half he possessed to get rid of his name. He always tried to disguise it under the abbreviation of "Lazzie," and, if contractions of this kind were ever legitimate and laudable there surely never was a case so urgent as this.

As we have said before, some of the sacred names are most suitable in this day. We never grow tired of John, James, Thomas, Sarah, Elizabeth, Samuel, Mary, and Ruth. But we cannot say this of others.

RECRUITS AND DESERTERS.—The following statement shows the number of recruits enlisted in the United Kingdom and finally approved, and the number of deserters from the army in ten years: In 1861 there were 8,138 recruits approved, and there were 4,559 desertions; in 1862, 4,642 recruits and 2,895 desertions; in 1863, 6,924 recruits and 2,971 desertions; in 1864, 11,234 recruits and 3,097 desertions; in 1865, 10,444 recruits and 3,519 desertions; in 1866, 10,663 recruits and 3,383 desertions; in 1867, 13,941 recruits and 3,449 desertions; in 1868, 10,732

recruits and 3,011 desertions; in 1869, 8,188 recruits and 3,341 desertions; in 1870, 14,927 recruits and 3,171 desertions. The total number of the recruits in the ten years was 99,878; and there were 33,578 desertions, so that one of every three recruits was needed to replace them.

FACETIE.

"I've buried my best friend," as the undertaker said when he buried the quack doctor.

When you can't think of what your wife charged you to bring home got hair pins. They are always handy in the house.

A CHINESE thief, having stolen a missionary's watch, brought it back to him next day to learn how to wind it up.

When a young lady offers to hem a cambric handkerchief for a rich bachelor she means to sow in order that she may reap.

NARROW-MINDED people are like narrow-necked bottles, for the less they have in them the more noise they make in pouring it out.

WHY are photographers the most uncivil of all tradespeople? Because when we make application for a copy of our portrait they always reply with a negative.

"Every tree is subject to disease," said a speaker in a Fruit Growers' Convention. "What ailment can you find on an oak?" asked the chairman. "A corn," was the triumphant reply.

HERE'S a comical advertisement: "To the Drapery Trade—Wanted, a young man, to be partly out-door, and partly behind the counter." What will be the result when the door slams?

A LADY preached at a church recently, and it was a noticeable fact that several ladies nodded assent to every proposition before the sermon was concluded. The gentlemen kept wide awake.

A MOVEMENT has been set on foot to erect an asylum for useless young men. The only trouble which the "committee" fear will be insurmountable is that of getting the building large enough.

A LADY was asked to join one of the divisions of the Daughters of Temperance. "That is unnecessary," she replied, "as it is my intention to join one of the Sons in the course of a few weeks."

A NEGRO, after gazing at some Chinese, shook his head, and solemnly said: "If de white folks be so dark as dat out dar, I wonder what's de colour of de black folks!"

"SIR," said to me an irate little gentleman, of about four feet eleven inches, "I would have you know, sir, that I have been well brought up!" I looked down on him. "Possibly," I said, "but you haven't been brought up far."

A GENTLEMAN asked a pretentious woman, who was talking about her travels, how she got along in countries where she did not understand the language. "Oh, easy enough," she said, "we always had an interpreter with us."

JONES says that he met his first wife in a storm, took her to the first ball in a storm, popped the question in a storm, married her in a storm, lived his subsequent married life in a storm, and buried her in pleasant weather.

A GENTLEMAN was recently foiled in his laudable purpose of committing suicide by the reprehensible conduct of an apothecary, who gave him prepared chalk for arsenic, and the might-have-been widow threatens to sue the said apothecary for obtaining money under false pretences.

THE following was posted on the door of a church in Hertfordshire some time back: "This is to give notice that no person is to be buried in this churchyard but those living in the church parish. Those who wish to be buried are desired to apply to me, Ephraim Grub, parish clerk."

THE LAST OF THE PANTOMIMES.—A City article lately reported that "a rally" took place on the Stock Exchange. We should like to know who took the parts of clown, pantaloon, pelted policeman, &c., and whence came the carrots, sausages, and the like!—Fun.

SMITH and Jones were at the menagerie and the conversation turned on Darwin's theory. "Look at that monkey," said Smith. "Think of its being an undeveloped human being?" "Human!" said Jones, contemptuously. "It's no more human than I am."

AMUSEMENTS OF NATURE.—Everything in nature indulges in amusement of some kind. The lightnings play, the winds whistle, the thunders roll, the snow flies, the rills and cascades sing and dance, the waves leap, the fields smile, the vines creep and run, the buds shoot, and the hills have tops—to play with.

THE celebrated Daniel Burgess, dining with a gentleman of his congregation, a large Cheshire

cheese, uneat, was brought to the table. "Where shall I cut it?" asked Daniel. "Anywhere you please, Mr. Burgess," answered the gentleman. Upon which Daniel handed it to the servant, desiring him to carry it to his house, and he would cut it at home.

AN INTELLIGENT "DIRECTOR."—A Dutchwoman kept a toll-gate. One foggy day a traveller asked, "Madam, how far is it to B—?" "Shoot a little ways" was the reply. "Yes, but how far?" again asked the traveller. "Shoot a little ways!" she repeated, more emphatically. "Madam, is it one, two, three, four or five miles?" The good woman ingeniously replied, "I dinks it is!"

AT THE RACE.

Mamma: "I think Oxford is the one—but ask Tom, he knows for certain!"

Ada: "I say, Tom, do tell what it is you swear by?"

Tom: "Aw—dunno! Sometimes bai Jingo, and aw—sometimes bai Jova. Ain't particular!"—Fun.

A REASON FOR RETICENCE.—"My son," said a good mother to her young hopeful, "did you wish your teacher a Happy New Year?" "No, ma," responded the boy. "Well, why not?" "Because," said the youth, "she isn't happy unless she's whipping some of us boys, and I was afraid if I wished her happiness she'd whip me."

SATISFACTION.

"Dining at Lady Laburnum's to-morrow?"

"Yes."

"So am I."

"So glad!"

"So glad you're glad!"

"So glad you're glad I'm glad!"—Punch.

PRESERVE US!—The other day, according to the *Bradford Observer*, there was a case in the borough court, in which a person of the name of Onions was charged with embezzling the money of Messrs. Pickles. As the case is not yet decided, we do not know whether the onion treated the pickle-illy, or the latter got the onion into a mixed pickle. We must wait till we can come to the bottom of their jars.—Fun.

THE MISER'S RUBB.—An avaricious fellow in Brussels gave a large dinner. Just as the guests sat down a piercing shriek was heard in the courtyard. The host hurried out, and returned pale, affrighted, and his hands covered with blood. "What is it?" was the inquiry. "Alas!" he said, "a poor workman, father of a large family, has met with a terrible accident; he was knocked down by a cart and grievously wounded. Let us aid him." A collection was taken up and the guests contributed twelve hundred francs. Generous souls, it was the miser's rubb to make them pay for dinner.

A ROLAND FOR AN OLIVER.

During a recent trial the following colloquy occurred between the counsel and a distinguished physician, who was a witness under cross-examination:

Counsel: "A doctor ought to be able to give an opinion of a disease without making mistakes."

Witness: "They are as capable as lawyers."

Counsel: "Doctors' mistakes are buried six feet underground; and lawyers' are not."

Witness: "But they are sometimes hung on a tree!"

FLOWERS OF FASHION.

Lady: "And why did you leave your last sitting?"

Coachman: "Well, ma'am, me and her ladyship 'ad a difference about a bokay. We was going to a drawing-room, and her ladyship wanted to put me off with a bokay made up in the 'ousekeeper's room! Well, I couldn't stand that, so I went and ordered a bokay at Covent Garden; and, would you believe it, ma'am, me and her ladyship 'ad a difference about the payment? So I give warning!"—Punch.

THE AMERICAN ARGUMENT.

There is one question touching the Alabama Claims which, perhaps has never occurred to the claimants, and that is whether they could have claimed more than they claim if the Government of this country had distinctly sanctioned the equipment of the "Alabama" as a privateer. But certainly they have right to claim "consequential damages" if any at all. One wonders that humorous Yankees do not see that their demand of two hundred millions reduces their entire claim to an absurdity in point of argument; whilst it is numerically a *multiplicatio ad absurdum*.—Punch.

OUT OF MEAT.—A worthy deacon being in a neighbouring town one Sunday, fell in with a travelling minister, and invited him to his town to preach the next Sabbath, and to his house to dinner. So Sunday morning the deacon told his family that the minister would be there to dinner, and as there was no meat told his hired boy to go to a certain place by the side of the road and dig out a rabbit that was sup-

posed to burrow there, and they would have him for dinner. While the boy was digging away at the rabbit hole the minister came along on his way to preach. On seeing the boy thus engaged he hauled up and accosted him with, "Well, my son, what are you doing there?" "Digging out a rabbit, sir," said the boy. "Why, but didn't you know that was very wicked? And, besides, you won't get him if you dig for him Sunday." "Get him!" said the boy, "I've got to get 'im, for the minister's coming to our house to dinner, and we ain't got no meat."

POEMERS.

What is the boatman's month? Why, the month of rows is (roses). Don't Jane know it?

What is the easiest way for a bad rider to show himself off? To get on a spirited horse.

Why is geology considered a deep science? Because it penetrates deep into the earth.

What's the difference between the earth and the sea? One is dirty, the other tidy.

Why is the figure nine like a peacock? Because it's nothing without its tail.

What fowl is most like a carriage in Japan? A coach-in-China.

When is a mother a father? When she's a sither (sire).

THE FORGOTTEN LADDER.—I was helping my father to cart grain into a stack on a hot day, and it happened that we had forgotten the ladder belonging to the front part of the rack on which the grain was loaded, and when my father attempted to get on the load, the ladder not being in its place, he found it very hard work. He finally succeeded in gaining the top, and, grunting with fatigue and vexation, he cautioned me characteristically not to forget to get that ladder, and put it in its place for the next load, which of course I forgot to do, and so did he. By some singular fatality the same happened three times, the caution being given with increased emphasis each time. When he had mounted the third time he turned towards me his sharp gray eye, and, puffing and blowing and entirely out of patience, he exclaimed: "Benjamin, if you can't think of the ladder, do put me in mind of it!"

A SECRET.

"How do you do, Mrs. Toss—have you heard that story about Mrs. Ludy?"

"Why, no, Mrs. Glad—do tell!"

"Oh, I promised not to tell for all the world; no, I must never tell on't. I am afraid it will get out."

"Why, I'll never tell on't as long as I live, jest as true as the world; what is it, come, tell."

"Now you won't say anything about it, will you?"

"No, I'll never open my head about it, never. Hope to die this mornin'."

"Well, if you'll believe me, Mrs. Punday told me, last night, that Mrs. Trot told her that her sister's husband was told by a person who dreamed it that Mrs. Trouble's oldest daughter told Mrs. Nichen's that her grandmother's heard by a letter that she got from her third sister's second husband's oldest brother's step-daughter that it was reported by the captain of a vessel arrived from the Feejee Islands, that the mermaids about that quarter wore sharkskin bustles, stuffed with pickled sels's toes!"

AN OMNIBUS TAX.

The simple abolition of Schedule D alone of all the Income-tax Schedules would, as the Times demonstrates, be unjust; but, if a suggestion made by the Times were adopted, Schedule D would probably be abolished very soon. Undoubtedly

"Nothing can be more unjust than that an artisan who receives weekly wages to the amount of 250s. a year should escape taxation, while a clerk who receives 200s. a year in quarterly stipends should pay 6d. in the pound Income-tax."

As this partiality of taxation is perfectly unjust, of course nothing can be more so. But there might be other inequalities equally unjust. If an artisan earning 250s. a year in weekly wages were forced to pay sixpence in the pound income-tax, it would be quite as unjust that a crossing-sweeper who earns a shilling a day should be charged nothing at all. Were the income-tax distributed over all incomes whatever, large and small, without exception, the injustice of its incidence would be greatly diminished. But that would be even more unpopular than taxing the people's tea and sugar. The masses would much rather have a morning's meal subject to insensible taxation than a free breakfast table procured by an income-tax shared by themselves.—*Punch*.

REASONS FOR GOING TO THE BOAT-RACE.

Because it is right to encourage all athletic exercises which tend to produce mainly vigour and calm self-control.

Because it is right to take part in a scene in which all classes of society can meet and mingle on common ground.

Because we wish to make ourselves better acquainted with the beauties of our glorious River Thames.

Because we are anxious to see whether the manners and habits of the lower orders are undergoing any improvement.

Because we are desirous to form some estimate, from personal observation, of the number of people present.

Because the village of Putney is dear to us, as having been the birthplace of the author of "The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire."

Because we wish to compare the present style of rowing with what it was when we were at "No. 5, Soho."

Because we take pleasure in watching the gradual progress of spring vegetation in the country.

Because we have a relation from the country staying with us who has never seen the Boat Race.

Because it gives us an opportunity of meeting so many old college friends.

Because the girls want to go.

Because we want a holiday.—*Punch*.

PACING THE FLOOR.

Oh, who would be a sailor's wife

When his ship has sailed away;

Her black hulk gone from out the dock,

And rising sails from the bay?

And white breeze and lengthening shade

Proclaim the day is o'er,

And in the gloaming the sailor's wife

Paces the lonely floor.

To other wives gray twilight brings

The greeting smile and kiss,

And all the merrid cares of day

Are changed for homely bliss;

But she can bear no welcome step,

His ship has left the shore,

His feet now tread the lonely deck,

As hers the lonely floor.

The rattle of a window pane,

The rustle of a leaf,

She sees his vessel drive, a wreck,

Upon some cruel reef.

And up and down, and up and down

Her anxious footsteps go;

As she would tread her fond fears dead,

She paces to and fro.

Saith she "My love, my true love,

Far out upon the sea,

How can I gain assurance

Of thy return to me?

For love is not all powerful,

And hearts may not rule Fate,

And, though I would die for thee,

I can do naught but wait.

"And on yon little cradle,

Its pillows still unpressed,

The fond smile of a father

Perchance may never rest.

I may be written widow

By the white writh of the sea,

Ere my dear sailor's baby

Lies sleeping on my knee."

Ah, who would be the sailor's wife

When his ship afar must go?

And sadly in the gloaming

She paces to and fro!

For restless heart makes restless feet,

And she hears the tempest roar,

And the wild, black waters wash and beat,

Pacing her lonely floor. M. K. D.

GEMS.

True independence is to be found where a person contracts his desires within the limits of his fortune.

There is no right which is enjoyed by man without involving, on his part, a corresponding obligation.

Few things are more necessary to success in life than decision of character. With it a man can rarely fail—without it he can rarely succeed.

With some exceptions, commentators would be much better employed in cultivating some sense for themselves than in attempting to explain the nonsense of others.

It is a mistake to imagine that the violent passions only, such as ambition and love, can triumph over the rest. Idleness, languid as it is, often masters them all.

VIRTUE.—A soul conversant with virtue resembles a fountain; for it is clear, and gentle, and sweet, and communicative, and rich, and harmless, and innocent.

NEW POWDER MAGAZINES.—In the new Army Estimates there is a vote of 15,000*l.* for new powder magazines on the Medway, 20,000*l.* having been already voted, while 64,500*l.* more will be required to

complete the work. These magazines are to be constructed some distance from the river, and are to be used in lieu of the magazines at Upnor Castle, which were pronounced a constant danger to the dockyard and Government establishments across the river, and to Chatham, Rochester, and adjacent towns. The new magazines are shortly to be commenced.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

LINSEED A CURE FOR CONSUMPTION.—The following is an instance of a remarkable cure of consumption, which had got to a very advanced stage. The sufferer was in the last stage of consumption. He had had advice and medicine from all the most noted doctors for miles around for many months, but, in spite of all, grew worse, till at last he was utterly unable to follow his employment. About this time he spat nearly a pint of thick bloody phlegm during the night; he shortly afterwards gave up taking medicine, as he felt that nothing could save him. He was recommended to take linseed boiled in water till the mixture was set like a jelly. He did so, thinking that it would at least relieve his incessant cough. After a short time he found himself a little better, and in a little over six months his cough had disappeared, and he was again well and hearty. He lived a long time after his recovery, and finally died of a complaint altogether foreign to the one he previously had. If any consumptive persons should be induced to try this remedy, let them boil the linseed to the consistency of a jelly, and sweeten with honey or sugar (the latter is the least sickly), and take two large teaspoonfuls every time they feel their cough coming on. The more their stomachs will allow them to take the better. If they feel disinclined to give up physic let them take both. Linseed is not nauseous, it will not produce costiveness, nor relax the bowels. It may open the pores of the skin a little, and necessitate care against catching cold.

STATISTICS.

ARMY ESTIMATES.—The Army Estimates for the year 1872-3 have been issued. They amount to 14,824,500*l.*, the net decrease as compared with last year being 1,027,000*l.* The pay of the regular forces is less by 173,900*l.*; the vote for the clothing establishments is less by 126,000*l.*, and that for the supply of warlike and other stores is less by 629,000*l.*, or about one-third. There is an increase of 6,000*l.* for the militia, and 48,700*l.* for provisions, etc. The effective services are estimated to cost 12,547,400*l.*, and the non-effective 2,277,100*l.* The decreases on the votes amount to 1,098,500*l.*, but some are increased to the amount of 71,300*l.* The regular forces estimated for in the ensuing year number 133,649, being a decrease of 1,398, as compared with the number voted last year. The forces in India number 62,957, being 93 men more than last year. For the volunteers 493,300*l.* is required, being a decrease of 12,450*l.* The army reserve force is estimated to cost 124,500*l.* The first class is increased in number by 1,000 men, but the second class is reduced by 5,000.

MISCELLANEOUS.

A LADY was once asked the reason why she always came so early to church. "Because," said she, "it is a part of my religion never to disturb the religion of others."

PRINCE BISMARCK is resolved to resign unless the Emperor gives him permission to nominate a sufficient number of members of the Upper House to carry the law on the inspection of schools in that chamber.

HONESTY.—There is no man but for his own interest hath an obligation to be honest. There may be sometimes temptations to be otherwise; but, all things considered, he shall find it the greatest ease, the highest profit, the best pleasure, the most safety, and the noblest fame, to be honest.

We are glad to be able to state that Her Majesty has been pleased to recognize the zeal displayed by the City on the occasion of the Thanksgiving, by conferring a baronetcy upon the Lord Mayor, and knighthood upon Mr. Alderman and Sheriff Truscott and Mr. Sheriff Bennett.

STREET ACCIDENTS.—The return of persons killed and wounded in the streets of London is like a list of casualties in war. There is a perpetual battle going on in our thoroughfares, and every day has its catalogue of killed or wounded. A crossing is an exposed point over which a flying army has to pass with the enemy's fire upon them. The numbers who have fallen in this struggle during the two years ending last June were 4,502, of whom 3,955 fell in the streets outside the City, and 547 within the City limits.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

ARTHUR G.—The lines are unsuitable.
EMMA.—The particulars are insufficient.
JENNIE.—The handwriting is bold and good enough.
MAY VIOLET.—The handwriting is particularly bold and dashing.

ALICE E.—The hair is of a pretty flaxen colour; the handwriting is bad.

M. F.—The especial request contained in your note cannot be complied with.

LUCY.—The inconvenience will disappear with the return of convalescence.

WM. B.—There is at present no opening for anything of the kind.

MIRAN.—Such service as we are able to render our correspondents is given free from charge to them.

MARK M.—The MS. is probably amongst the many which remain unread.

E. G.—We do not find the name of the vessel in any of the recent numbers of "Lloyd's List."

MISS B. (Sandgate).—The letter of the 29th February if received has been mislaid. You should write again.

POLLIE.—Some other name or initial should be added to prevent confusion.

SUBSCRIBER (Usk).—The reply to your former letter was given on the last page of No. 461.

A CONSTANT SUBSCRIBER.—For such constitutional denagements you should obtain professional advice.

EVELYN S.—We cannot divine for whom your letter is intended, for in it is to be found no other name but your own.

BESSIE.—It is inconvenient to pay proper attention to a response written precisely at the back of another lady's response to a different individual.

A READER.—We have often said in answer to other correspondents that in our opinion a man of the age of twenty is too young to marry.

CHARLES W.—We have been unable to form any favourable opinion of the verses and are afraid the poet's mantle did not descend upon their author at his birth.

S. F. (Leeds).—Taken as a whole the expectations appear to be too great to permit the hope of their realization to be indulged.

J. B.—The interest of the anecdote is weakened by the lapse of time—seven years; and in other respects the offered contribution is not calculated to produce the result anticipated.

A WORKING MAN.—The court will grant you no relief; when both parties have overstepped the line it will not interfere. 2. The remedy is patience and an occasional warm bathing of the part affected.

INQUIRITIVE.—The writing is exceedingly nice; the style is so very good that we can only just suppress the curiosity which would tempt us to wish to know more of the writer.

PHYSICIAN.—The prospect of a satisfactory arrangement being so remote the lady probably prefers to take the advice of friends who persuade her not to think even of a love affair whose issue upon the face of it is unpromising.

CHEERFUL.—The only solid objection that can be taken to the handwriting is that it is somewhat careless. Your allusion to the other matter, though superficially "taking," leaves many things untold of which a would-be lover must be desirous to be informed.

LOTTIE V.—The name Charlotte is supposed to be emblematic of nobility; Victoria, of conquest; Adela, of aristocracy; Rosalind, of grace and loveliness combined; and Walter, of triumphant victory. The hair sent is a very dark brown; the handwriting is somewhat careless.

ANNE.—Perhaps if you have no very strong home ties in the shape of mother or kindred, your better plan is to emigrate. Female emigrants of your age who go out under proper auspices are generally successful from a lady's point of view. With very few exceptions they marry.

HASTING ROBIN and J. C.—You should explain what you mean by a nice young lady. From such indefinite words as you have used none of the sex can gather any notion of your tastes and disposition; they are unlikely to waste time upon descriptions about the signification of which they are in doubt.

EAGLE.—After the response our duties, save in the case of an occasional reminder in the shape of a stray line, are at an end. Then the mysteries of electricity commence. These are known only by the result, it being generally

admitted that an analysis or explanation of electricity is impossible. Sufficient that it exists, and that in the hands of the son of Venus it is a far more potent weapon than the old-fashioned dart.

THE MISTERS C. B., and A. should endeavour to give their intended husbands a better opportunity of forming an opinion concerning their appearance and disposition. Although imagination goes a great way too much must not be expected even from the luxuriance with which Cupid has endowed that faculty.

ELFRIDA.—The style of the handwriting, though diffuse, is good. You cannot do much with the hair. A constant saturation with a vegetable oil is often recommended, and is effective; though such a practice is inimical to that refreshment and cleanliness produced by frequent ablutions.

ORRIS.—The fact is often alluded to both by writers and speakers; it is recorded in most Cyclopedias and Natural Histories under the appropriate head. We are sorry that the point escapes your attention, and shall not have space to afford you further explanation on that especial subject, although upon other topics we will endeavour to meet your views.

WILLIAM (Richmond, Yorkshire).—Whether Sweet William or not how can she tell as long as you conceal both face and age from her? She would appreciate your gallantry in abstaining from too close researches concerning the summers that have passed since she began to bloom, but it is right not only that you should make confessions to her about your own age but that those confessions should be accurate.

ANOTHER AIR CASTLE.

I made a home for the coming birds,
With window and porch and door;
With that of straw like a cotter's house,
And moss like a woodbine o'er.

"A dainty nook," so I softly said,
And perched it beneath the eaves,
Away from breath of the icy wind,
In the shadow of summer leaves.

Cotton and tow in its corner laid,
The gold of the honest sun,
As faithfully in its door was left,
As under a greater one.

And then I waited a day or two;
I thought I should hear the cry
Of an eager crowd, full of rivalry,
Anxious to rest or to buy.

But not a bird to the cottage came—
The obstinate, vexing things!
Though over my table and hand and book
Fell shadows of fitting wings.

The blue jays laughed at my lure of crumbs;
The wren, with a short remark,
Just settled down on a knotty bough
For its ant-sulphured bark.

The sparrows built by the far-off barn,
Yet came, port as crows, across,
To pick the thread from my tath away,
And flit all the tow and moss.

They fought and tattered the roof aside;
The wind round the corner blew
Until the house was a ragged wreck,
From which all the song birds flew.

Well it's only a castle in air after all!
I've built them by scores before now,
And they never were taken, but crumbled
away.

Or vanished, I could not tell how.

Yet though, in the shadowy vale of the past,
Lie tumbled down turret and wall,
I'll build in the air other castles, I know,
And shut up my eyes when they fall.

E. L.

ANNE, twenty-four, tall, dark, ladylike, good looking, and will make a loving wife. Respondent must be tall, dark, loving, and a sergeant in the army.

HAPPY ANNA, nineteen, fair, and domesticated, would like to marry an educated, dark gentleman, not more than twenty-five years of age; a farmer preferred.

HARRIET, twenty-six, middle height, dark hair, light blue eyes, pretty, and fond of home. Respondent must be dark, tall, good looking; a tradesman preferred.

ELLEN, twenty-four, dark hair, hazel eyes, very good looking, and fond of home. Respondent must be fair and loving; a clerk preferred.

CLARA, nineteen, light hair, violet eyes, ladylike, and musical. Respondent must be dark, medium height, loving, and fond of home; a police sergeant preferred.

FAIR ROSEMOND, twenty-six, medium height, dark, good musician, domesticated, and loving, wishes to marry a tall, dark gentleman who is steady and able to keep a wife comfortably.

LOUIS H., twenty-three, tall, fair, good looking, would like to marry a young lady who is fair, amiable, and fond of children; he has an income of 300l. per year, and good prospects.

ARIADNE, twenty-seven, dark, auburn hair, good tempered, cheerful, and capable of making an industrious working-man's home happy. Respondent should be a mechanic, fond of home and music.

HAPPY AMY, twenty-three, tall, dark eyes and hair, a good housekeeper, and musical, wishes to correspond with a tall, dark gentleman about twenty-five, in a good position, with a view to matrimony.

L. S. S., eighteen, tall, fair, good looking, and in a good position, wishes to marry a tall, dark, good-looking, and steady young man, who is of a kind and loving disposition, in a good position, and fond of music.

MUSICAL, 5ft. 8in., considered handsome, in a lucrative situation, light curly hair, slight moustache and whiskers. Respondent must be good looking, fond of music and home.

HARRY, twenty-one, 5ft. 4in., dark brown hair, brown eyes, affectionate, fond of home, the son of parents in independent circumstances, and is in a good business for himself. Respondent must be of a respectable family and loving.

CAMELLA, eighteen, medium height, respectably connected, dark, curling hair, loving and lively disposition, musical, and would make a good wife. Respondent must be dark, and about twenty-four, good tempered, affectionate, and fond of home.

A. W., twenty-six, medium height, dark hair and eyes, handsome, accomplished, and very fond of home and children. Respondent must be not more than twenty-nine, rather tall, dark, good looking, and in receipt of a good salary.

N. B., widower, thirty-six, 5ft. 8in., dark eyes and hair, fond of home, affectionate, has one child, in business for himself, and has a little property. Respondent must be ladylike, educated, domesticated, fond of music and children, with a little money.

L. H. P., twenty-five, medium height, fair, slight moustache, good tempered, fond of music, and has a knowledge of Latin. Respondent must be about twenty-three, tall, dark, fond of music and children; a young lady who has a little money preferred.

JANE S., would like to marry a gentleman from twenty to twenty-nine, tall, fair, good tempered, loving, and fond of home. "Jane S." is twenty, tall, rather dark, domesticated, fond of home, can play the piano, and has a good income.

HAROLD, twenty-three, tall, dark hair and eyes, rather good looking, and fond of music. Respondent must be a little older than himself, tall, handsome, not dark, accomplished, and fond of home; a young lady from the country preferred.

BUSINESS, medium height, good looking, a tradesman in a country town, wants to make his home more comfortable; he is in a good position, and in receipt of a very good income. Respondent must be a good-looking and loving young lady about twenty-four, and have a little money.

L. E. S., twenty-seven, tall, dark hair and eyes, happy disposition, good pianist, domesticated, accomplished, and has a good income. Respondent must be tall, dark, loving, fond of music, and a gentleman in a good business in Edinburgh preferred, about twenty-six or thirty years of age.

IRMA, twenty-eight, 5ft. 4in., very good looking, nice figure, small hands and feet, dark eyes, and rather fair, can turn her hand to domestic work if required, very fond of music, and has expectations. Respondent must be a gentleman, very industrious, fond of home, with good income, tall, not dark, good tempered, and of a suitable age.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

TOM BOWLINE is responded to by—"Sarah M.," twenty-four, dark hair, fair complexion, loving, and domesticated.

STED by—"Gerty," eighteen, medium height, very pretty, merry, warm hearted, fair, and a good pianist.

R. H. by—"Lucy," twenty, medium height, dark, very fond of music, domesticated, loving, and fond of home.

ETTES-NIGHT by—"Elise J.," twenty-two, tall, a domestic servant.

PILOT by—"E. Q.," thirty-one, answers to all the requirements of the "Thames Pilot," and would make an industrious, loving wife to a good and kind husband.

MAUD by—"Eagle," twenty-four, good looking, and thinks he would answer her requirements; has about the same money.

VICTOR by—"Amy," twenty-one, tall, very fair, has dark blue eyes, is merry, pretty, loving, and accomplished.

J. J. by—"Florence," twenty-seven, fair, blue eyes, can cook, and manage a home. "Florence" would make a loving and devoted wife to a kind husband.

W. W. by—"Amy," twenty-four, medium height, very respectable, fair, fond of children, and would make a loving affectionate wife.

MOSCOW and VICTOR by—"Edith W.," nineteen, tall, brown hair, blue eyes, would make a loving wife; and "Amy," twenty, tall, dark hair, gray eyes, domesticated, cheerful, and fond of home.

PALLION T. H. by—"C. B. G.," forty-five, a widow, of medium height, dark, of home-loving habits, has been very happy in the married state, and would like to marry a steady, industrious man.

NELLIE S. by—"John McK.," thirty-five, a widower, 5ft. 8in., dark hair, eyes, and moustache, a shipwright by trade, has four children (ages from two to ten), is cheerful, industrious, fond of home, and to a good wife would make a good husband.

TRINUCULO by—"Sarah," who thinks she would suit; she is twenty-four, medium height, rather dark, good tempered, would make a good wife, and is used to business.

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